

Wednesday
December 2 1998
Britain's newspaper
for Europe

The Guardian

EUROPE

G2 with today's European weather

Polly Toynbee's wish list, page 8

Forest cuts
Brazil's baffling decision

France and Germany agree to press ahead with tax harmonisation Europe: the showdown

German minister calls for end to British veto

Martin Walker in Brussels and Ian Traynor in Potsdam

TONY BLAIR'S moment of truth with Europe arrived last night, as Germany and France steered a collision course with Britain by vowing to continue their campaign for European tax harmonisation.

Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, who strongly opposes harmonisation, arrived in Brussels for the monthly meeting of European Union finance ministers yesterday hoping to garner support for Britain's position. Instead, he found himself outvoted by Oskar Lafontaine, his German counterpart, who threatened to outflank the British veto with a call for Europe to take decisions by majority vote.

The renewed isolation in Europe which the British government faces, was underlined as French and German leaders issued a joint declaration in Potsdam yesterday for "rapid progress towards tax harmonisation in Europe".

Britain's European choice is becoming stark. On one hand lies a Thatcher-like future of obstinacy and repeated use of the veto; on the other looms a British embrace of the grandiose agenda for an ever more integrated Europe, from taxes to social policy, agreed in Potsdam. There is little room left for Britain to chart a compromise course between these increasingly clear alternatives.

The immediate reaction from Mr Brown, who has repeatedly threatened to use the British veto against EU tax plans, was firmly negative. He was scathing about the idea of Britain losing its veto. "Everybody knows that tax proposals require unanimity, and a change to that requires a treaty change which requires unanimity. And that is simply not going to happen," he said.

The Conservative leader, William Hague, advised the Government to "have no truck with any agenda to have British taxes set in Brussels. Tax competition is healthy. We want to be in Europe, not run by Europe."

Malcolm Bruce, the Liberal Democrats' Treasury spokesman, said: "Governments must be allowed tax flexibility to match the needs of individual economies."

The German Chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, stressed that he wanted to use his presidency of the EU, starting next month, to reform the Union's institutions as the prerequisite for expanding into eastern Europe. That meant a smaller European Commission and the introduction of majority voting, doing away with national vetoes.

The joint German-French declaration said: "We will campaign for stronger co-ordination in economic policy, particularly in the framework of the 11 euro-countries, for rapid progress in harmonisation of taxes, and for the formation of a real European social model."

Jacques Chirac, the French president, Lionel Jospin, the prime minister, and Mr Schröder described the Franco-German relationship as "more important than ever as the engine of Europe's construction".

From Potsdam, the two finance ministers, Mr Lafontaine and Dominique Strauss-Kahn, flew to Brussels to ambush Mr Brown with the joint proposal for an end to national vetoes.

Mr Lafontaine said: "It is clear that as the Union enlarges, we cannot discuss details every time under the principle of unanimity."

This was precisely what Mr Brown wanted to hear yesterday. Battling against what he described as "a pack of scare stories" in the Euro-sceptic British press, Mr Brown said he was "winning the argument that the way forward for Europe is through economic reform and not tax harmonisation".

At the same time, Britain approved a proposal from the Commission that would make



Moot point... Germany's Oskar Lafontaine issued threat to outflank British veto

PHOTOGRAPH: HERMANN KNEIPP/PTZ

Mr Lafontaine the prime spokesman for the new single currency at G7 meetings for the whole of next year. He will speak for the euro during the German presidency, which runs from January until July; and when it passes to Finland, Mr Lafontaine will continue as main euro spokesman until the following year, when France takes over.

The Franco-German accord, and their firm agreement on tax harmonisation, undermined British hopes of using the political relationship with the new German Social Democratic government to make a third member of the traditional Franco-German alliance.

Despite clashes on reform of the Common Agricultural Policy and the future of nuclear energy, the underlying commitment of France and Germany to their common strategy appears strong, and likely to continue once they are inside the euro zone after January, where British vetoes will lose their force.

UK Treasury officials were alarmed by the Franco-German suggestion that with Britain outside the euro zone, they could go ahead with tax

and other harmonisation measures as they pleased. This could complicate British hopes of joining the euro in future. By the time Britain is ready, a harmonised European tax system could be a reality, and accepting it could become a condition of joining the euro.

Reports, pages 4; Leader comment, page 9

1998-99 (M. 1998), 2nd L. 1. Constitutional right of sovereignty, president, governor, upper house of legislature, etc., to reject a legislative enactment

'I believe the unanimity rule cannot be maintained. It is clear that as the Union enlarges, we cannot discuss details every time under the principle of unanimity'

Oskar Lafontaine, German finance minister

'Oskar said that? Well Oskar's wrong. The idea that we'd give up the veto is the most ludicrous thing I've heard this week. And it's been a helluva week'

British government spokesman, Brussels

'Everybody knows that tax proposals require unanimity, and a change to that requires a treaty change which requires unanimity. And that is simply not going to happen'

Gordon Brown

'We will campaign for stronger co-ordination in economic policy, particularly in the framework of the 11 euro-countries, for rapid progress in harmonisation of taxes, and for the formation of a real European social model'

French-German joint declaration

Nice to see you, to see you, nice? The general moves in

Nick Hopkins

GENERAL Augusto Pinochet finally moved out of a private psychiatric clinic last night, and headed to a seven bedroom house on an exclusive estate in Surrey.

The general, ordered from Grovelands Priory after the hospital accused him of outstaying his welcome, was heckled by a dozen protesters as he sped through the gates in an ambulance flanked by police cars, and headed towards Virginia Water, Surrey, as the general's entourage approached.

A police helicopter circled over the exclusive Wentworth estate in Virginia Water, Surrey, as the general's entourage approached. Police Commander Carl Gathorn said last night: "I can confirm that General Pinochet is now in residence in a house on the Wentworth estate."

He would not discuss what security arrangements had been made.

The estate has one of the highest concentrations of millionaire residents in the

country. But it seems unlikely that the general will be bumping into neighbours Forsyth and Russ Abbott during what could be a lengthy sojourn. The house earmarked for the Chilean has a long se-



Pinochet's ambulance leaves Grovelands Priory

Neighbours

The rich and famous who have lived on the Wentworth Estate include...

- The Duchess of York
- Television presenter Bruce Forsyth
- Comedian Russ Abbott
- Golfers Sandy Lyle and Sam Torrance
- Radio presenter Terry Wogan
- Television personality Michael Parkinson
- Singers David Essex, Elton John and Rod Stewart have homes nearby

Hiring the house will probably cost the Chilean government a small fortune. The Duchess of York rented a similar property for £5,000 a month following her divorce.

The general's near neighbours seemed underwhelmed at the prospect of his arrival.

"It's a bit like being told Adolf Hitler is moving into the house next door," said one. "There are supposed to be Russian underworld figures and members of the Hong Kong triads living around us on the estate, so a former Chilean dictator who is supposed to be responsible for the disappearance of hundreds of his own people is not exactly big news."

The general is expected to remain at his new address until the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, decides whether extradition proceedings to send him to Spain should go ahead, or whether he should be sent home. That announcement is due on December 11. If the judgment goes against him, he could spend months in Britain embroiled in a lengthy extradition battle.

Letters, Mark Steel, page 9

Albania D18.50	Germany D18.50	Italy D18.50	Spain P275
Austria D18.50	France D18.50	Japan D18.50	Sweden SK17
Belgium D18.50	Greece D18.50	South Africa R10	Switzerland SF3.50
Denmark D18.50	Hungary D18.50	Switzerland SK65	Thailand B80
Finland D18.50	Ireland D18.50	Switzerland SK1290	Turkey TL70,000
France D18.50	Italy D18.50	Switzerland SK17	USA D18.50
Germany D18.50	Japan D18.50	Switzerland SF3.50	
Greece D18.50	South Africa R10	Thailand B80	
Hungary D18.50	Switzerland SK65	Turkey TL70,000	
Ireland D18.50	Switzerland SK1290	USA D18.50	
Italy D18.50	Switzerland SK17		
Japan D18.50	Switzerland SF3.50		
South Africa R10	Thailand B80		
Switzerland SK65	Turkey TL70,000		
Switzerland SK1290	USA D18.50		
Thailand B80			
Turkey TL70,000			
USA D18.50			

UK news
...the producers of the new Channel 4 series 'The Big Game'...

International
American gun clubs
...to court for the right to bear arms as a teenager was accused of shooting dead five family members...

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Sketch

Number is up for Labour loyalists



Simon Hoggart

HERE is an old tale about a lunatic asylum where the patients have heard their favourite jokes so often that they recognise them by number. "Fifteen!" says the head nurse and the patients fall about laughing. "Number 57!" says someone else and they are rolling around in stitches.

A visitor asks if he can try "31!" he shouts, and is met by silence. "They laughed at you, why not me?" he asks. "Ah," says the nurse, "it's the way you tell 'em."

I was reminded of a bin by the Commons yesterday, not for the first time. It was the last day's debate on the Queen's Speech, with the economy the main topic. Francis Maude, the shadow chancellor, has been an ungainly, uncertain performer in the past and clearly the Government had high hopes of another Tory debacle.

But with this lot, nothing can be left to chance or ability. So the Labour whips provided their loyal satraps with a list of 10 numbered questions designed to floor Mr Maude. All dutiful backbenchers had to do was to stand up, wait until he gave way, and then read out a pre-digested question. It would be as genuine as those double entendres on Blind Date. ("Number 3, if I were a plumber would you let me clean round your U-bend?")

The trouble was that—as so often happens—whichever had the job of copying the questions and distributing them out had left the original in the photocopier. A passing Tory realised what he had found and ran off umpteen more copies to distribute around the House, each with the message on top: "Labour's proposed intervention on Francis—recovered from a photocopier. Tee hee!" (Like the Bamberish tone of the last two words. You can imagine the finder going off to the tea

room for a plateful of cream cakes to celebrate.) So by the time Mr Maude got up almost everyone in the House, including the Speaker, had copies of these spontaneous interventions.

First up to intervene was a Tory, Howard Flight. He thanked the Government for making sure that the Opposition had the list of questions. He offered to help by asking at least one himself. "Can I begin by asking the shadow chancellor why he is opposed to the extra £40 billion of public spending?"

Mr Maude was especially grateful for this because it gave him a chance to avoid answering the question. (What Labour would like the Tories to do is to say: "Yes, we would cut spending so that old ladies are abandoned on trolleys while their grandchildren leave school at the age of 13, unable to read or even to tie their laces. But they are too canny to do this.")

A Labour MP, Gerald Davies, stepped smartly into the trap. The shadow chancellor had given two different views on whether the Bank of England should be allowed to set interest rates. Which was his real opinion?

This question bore a strange resemblance to the paragraph at the end of the crib sheet: "Given the complete confusion in his party... will he tell the House once and for all, will he secure Bank of England independence?"

Delighted Tories shouted: "Number 10! Number 10!" Dale Campbell-Savours decided to save everyone's time. He stood up and asked for an answer "to Number 1 on the list. And he can't say he doesn't know because he's been given notice."

That was ironic, but some Labour backbenchers wouldn't recognise irony if he came up, cocked a leg, and peed on their shoes. Helen Southworth of Warrington inquired whether Mr Maude remembered the time when, under the Tories, inflation had reached 15 per cent? Tories had recognised Number 3, so they shouted: "Three, three!" Like a treeful of starlings spotting a cat.

Derek Twigg even had another go at asking Number 2 again, but it was too late. For once in his parliamentary life, Mr Maude had won.

Third biggest fall on record as recession fears grow □ Survey shows manufacturing orders drying up

Shares hit by £35bn crash

Larry Elliott Economics Editor

SHARE prices plunged yesterday as a fresh wave of job losses in industry and signs of a slowdown in the services sector finally alerted City dealers to the risk of the economy sliding into recession.

As £35 billion pounds was wiped off share values, the FTSE 100 index followed Monday's 100 point drop with a fall of 206.4 points—the third biggest on record and the largest since October 1992.

Following heavy overnight losses on the stock exchanges in New York and Tokyo, the

London market saw its recent rally brought to an abrupt end by a survey showing order books drying up in manufacturing and a warning from the CBI that consumers are starting to rein in spending.

The Chartered Institute for Purchasing and Supply said industry was contracting at its fastest rate since it started its monthly survey seven years ago. "The trend is showing no sign of picking up," said Peter Thomson, its director-general. "Export orders are slightly less awful than last month. What is really depressing is that domestic demand is so weak."

The Bank of England said last month that economic surveys were a key factor in decisions on interest rates, and the pessimistic tone of yesterday's data from both manufacturing and services prompted speculation that the cost of borrowing might be cut for the third successive month when the Bank's Monetary Policy Committee meets next week.

Textiles giant Courtaulds reflected the downbeat mood when it announced the loss of 1,220 jobs yesterday. In addition, the United Glass plant in St Helens, Merseyside, is to close with the loss of another 450 jobs.

With the Conservatives stepping up their attacks on the government's handling of the economy, the CBI

reported that firms in consumer, business and professional services expected growth to slow over the winter.

It said that firms such as accountants, advertisers, computer and law companies, hotels, restaurants, bars and travel agencies were starting to feel the impact of economic slowdown.

"This snapshot shows that weakening confidence among firms in the other sectors of the economy is now shared by those in the consumer, business and professional services," said Sudhir Junankar, the CBI's associate director of economic analysis.

Although these sectors have seen an increase in the

amount of business they do, those reliant on ordinary consumers are not expecting this to continue.

Stock markets have soared since the start of October amid optimism that lower interest rates will underpin robust growth next year. However, some analysts have been warning that the valuations put on shares now bear little relation to corporate earnings in a period of retrenchment.

"Stock markets are coming back to reality," said James McKay at Commonwealth Bank of Australia. He added that the correction on Wall Street, which fell by more than 300 points on Monday, was long overdue, after "irrational exuberance" recently

powered the US market to record highs.

Although consumer spending has held up in Britain despite higher interest rates, Britain's biggest mortgage lender reports today that the economic slowdown has started to affect the housing market. House prices fell by 0.6 per cent in November. The Halifax's survey showed that the annual rate of house price inflation declined from 6.7 per cent to 4.9 per cent.

A similar report, published by the Nationwide Building Society earlier this week, showed the same underlying picture of a downturn in the housing market.

City notebook, page 11

Official: Joel, 10, becomes Joella after lifelong fight for new birth certificate



Joella Holliday yesterday with her mother, Julia Farmer, who said: "We have never thought of Joella being any different" PHOTOGRAPH: GEOFF ROBINSON

Stuart Miller

A CHILD who was registered as a boy but who has grown up as a girl has won a nine-year battle to change her birth certificate.

Joella Holliday, aged 10, was born with a rare medical condition which caused horrific disfigurements to the lower body, making it difficult for doctors to determine the gender. With the child not expected to survive, he was christened Joel David within hours of birth and registered as a boy because he had male chromosomes.

But on his first birthday, Joel became Joella after doctors advised that as he lacked male sex organs, he would have a better life if raised as a girl. Five months later, Joella underwent the first of a series of operations to become female.

Her mother, Julia Farmer, applied to the Registrar General for a new birth certificate as soon as the child left hospital, but the application was refused.

It was not until the Office of National Statistics was presented with 47 pages of evidence from a Great Ormond Street specialist explaining Joella's condition that it accepted a medical mistake had been made when the child was registered as a boy.

The ONS has now taken the unusual step of agreeing to issue a new birth certificate, and the family plans to have Joella rechristened next month in her village church in Pinchbeck, Lincolnshire.

Mrs Farmer, aged 30, said yesterday: "It's just so strange that it's all over. I can't believe it's been nine years and now we can get on with being normal. We have never thought of Joella being any different. It was our persistence that

won out. The question always was, if the operation was legal, why was it not legal for her to be who she was?"

"She shouldn't have been put in the same category as a transsexual. She was only a child born in a real mess."

Joella, who is receiving hormone treatment, has undergone dozens of operations for her condition, called *exomphalos ectopia vesicae* and *hemi-bladder*. It meant that the child's bladder and intestines were outside the body, there was no abdominal wall and there was an unfurrowed phallus in two parts.

She does not have a uterus and will require further surgery to overcome her internal problems. Otherwise, she is a normal little girl, says her mother. "She likes loud music, boys and shopping. There's nothing different about her at all."

Charles Brook, the professor of endocrinology at Great Ormond Street who supported Joella's case, said: "It seems no one understood the nature of Joella's complaint. It had not been explained properly to the relevant authorities and so they got it muddled up with transsexuals and all that rubbish."

Joella had an embryological abnormality and was inappropriately assigned to the male sex when she was born and now she's been correctly assigned. It's taken the Registrar General a bit of time to catch up."

In the course of her campaign, Mrs Farmer tracked down the Rev John Read, the hospital chaplain who performed the first christening. "It's nice to know that she is being christened again. It's a new start," he said.

As for Joella, she said: "It's really good. I can look forward to getting married."

Tatchell fined 'derisory' £18.60 for pulpit protest

Will Woodward

GAY RIGHTS activist Peter Tatchell was yesterday fined £18.60 for a "puerile" protest from the pulpit during the Archbishop of Canterbury's Easter sermon.

The reason for the precise amount of the fine was not stated, but it happens to coincide with the 1960 Ecclesiastical Courts Jurisdiction Act, the little-known law which Tatchell was found guilty of breaking. Canterbury stipendiary magistrate Michael Kelly also ordered him to pay £320 costs.

Tatchell was the first person in 31 years to be successfully prosecuted under the

act, which forbids "riotous, violent or indecent behaviour in any cathedral church".

The defence case yesterday included a claim that under the act, Jesus would have been liable to prosecution for overturning the money changers' table.

But Mr Kelly told Tatchell, who pleaded not guilty: "Your conduct violated the rights of worshippers on one of the most important days in the Christian calendar."

The court heard that Tatchell, aged 46, and six other activists from gay rights group OutRage! climbed into the pulpit during Dr George Carey's sermon at Canterbury Cathedral. Before being removed, Tatchell delivered a

short speech criticising the archbishop's opposition to gay fostering and an equal age of consent.

Mr Kelly told him: "I am sure that some people would have been disgusted and deeply offended by your conduct. I suspect that the vast majority would regard your conduct as an insignificant and transient incident in the history of a great cathedral."

"I agree with your counsel when he said that the Church of England is a robust institution and I have no doubt that in spite of the publicity here your puerile conduct will soon be forgotten, although your cause may not be."

Mr Kelly told Tatchell he was "a man of previous good

character" with "a clear commitment to your cause and a belief in non-violent protest".

In 1987, the last time a conviction was achieved under the act, two anti-Vietnam war protesters were jailed for two months, the maximum penalty, for interrupting a lesson read by Harold Wilson at a Methodist service during the 1985 Labour conference.

Labour MP Tony Benn and Liberal Democrat MP Evan Harris gave character statements supporting Tatchell. Mr Benn said the activist had never urged anyone to break the law. "But I must say to the court that I believe conscience lies above the law because conscience is God-made and the law is man-made."

Outside the court, Tatchell said: "I have been found guilty but I don't feel guilty. I stood up for human rights and would do it again."

The fact that the court has given a derisory fine of £18.60 indicates that the magistrate himself does not regard it as a serious offence.

"It is Dr Carey who supports discrimination—it is I who supports equality. He is the guilty person. He is the person who supported the abuse of human rights."

In a statement, Lambeth Palace said Dr Carey was committed to a "continuing dialogue with homosexuals". He "had no role in the prosecution of Mr Tatchell and did not seek one".



Tatchell's 'puerile' conduct will soon be forgotten

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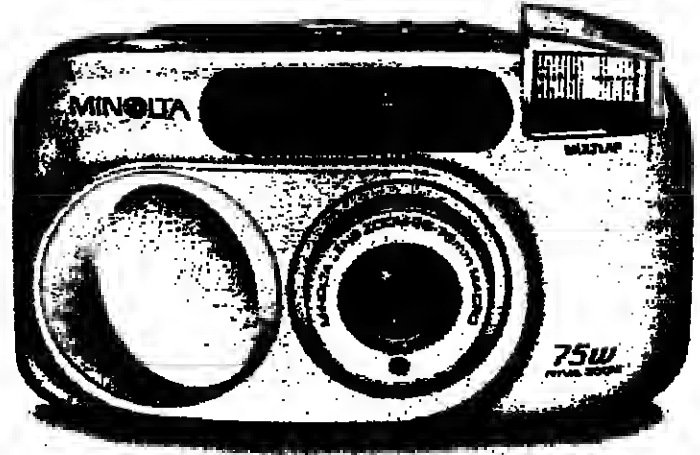
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Turner Prize goes to Ofili



The boy dung good... Turner Prize judges praised the originality, energy and complexity of Chris Ofili's painting

PHOTOGRAPH BY EAMONN MCCABE

At last, a painter wins – with a little help from elephant dung and glitter

Dan Gleister
Arts Correspondent

THANKS to a large helping of elephant dung, conceptual art's hold on the Turner Prize was broken last night when Chris Ofili became the first painter to win the £20,000 prize since 1985.

But he is not the sort of painter who would necessarily appease the traditionalists who have made a habit of protesting against the Turner Prize's recent championing of conceptual art. His colourful works include dried, resin-coated elephant dung, glitter and cartoon characters as well as incorporating references to black culture and Renaissance painting. Some even glow in the dark.

Ofili was the only man and the only painter among the four shortlisted artists. The other artists included a filmmaker, a sculptor and a photographer. The last painter to win the Turner Prize named after one of Britain's greatest painters – was Howard Hodgkin in 1985. Ofili is the first black artist to win the prize.

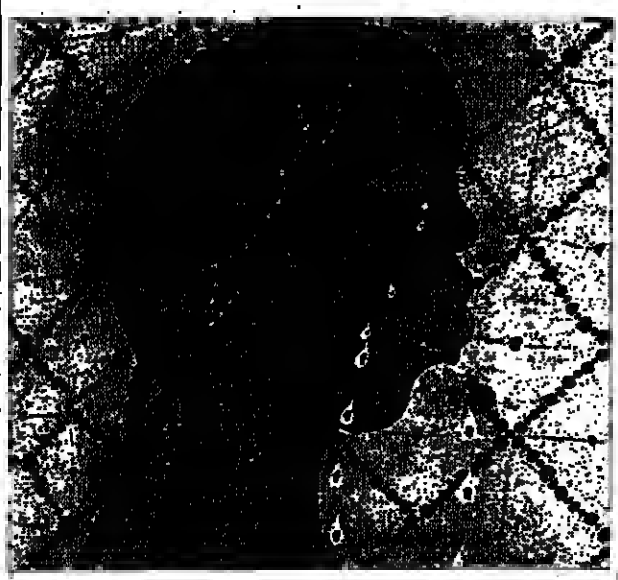
Announcing the winner, the judges praised "the originality and energy of his painting, and his dynamic use of colour". They also admired "the complexity of his work, with its multilayered references to contemporary urban culture and awareness of the history of art".

Ofili was the hot favourite with the bookmakers to win this year's prize, with closing odds of 5-4 on. His Turner Prize success caps an astounding year for the young painter, following an acclaimed and highly popular show at the Southampton City Art Gallery which later moved to the Serpentine Gallery in London. It is currently at Manchester City Art Gallery.

His paintings, which veer from the figurative to the abstract, often star a mythical black superhero called Cap-

tain Shit, inspired by the Marvel comics, Captain Shit is surrounded in many pictures by cut-outs of figures from black popular culture, from James Brown to Muhammad Ali. But his work is not exclusively about the black experience: pornography and the Bible also get mentions.

"My project is not a PC project," he has said. "It allows you to laugh about issues that are potentially serious. There are no rules, and even the ones you set for yourself can be temporary."



No Woman No Cry, Ofili's tribute to Doreen Lawrence

Ofili is unafraid to incorporate contemporary politics into his work. One painting in the Turner Prize exhibition, No Woman No Cry, is a tribute to the dignity and suffering of Doreen Lawrence, the mother of the murdered teenager Stephen Lawrence.

It features teardrops descending from a woman's face. Each tear contains a tiny black and white portrait of Stephen Lawrence.

Ofili was born in Manchester in 1968 and studied fine art at Chelsea School of Art before completing a master's in painting at the Royal College of Art. He was a winner in the Whitworth Young Contemporaries exhibition and has twice been shortlisted for the BP Portrait Award.

Although his work incorporates many elements of popular culture, he insists that it is anything but frivolous. "My work and the way that I work comes out of experimentation, but it also comes out of a love of painting, a love affair with painting."

The elephant dung, which he acquires free of charge from London Zoo, was inspired by a visit to Zimbabwe. He both stands his paintings on the dung and sticks it to the canvas.

The other artists on the shortlist were Tacita Dean, Cathy de Monchaux and Sam Taylor-Wood. The judges were Ann Gallagher from the British Council, the curator and critic Fumio Nanjo, the collector and Pet Shop Boy

Adrian Searle

Review

CHRIS OFILI has proved popular with a black audience which, it is often assumed, feels alienated by contemporary art. Ofili is truly popular, and also highly respected, among artists.

His paintings are marked by a broad range of influences and borrowings – from Yoruba and Australian Aboriginal dot paintings; from 1970s black funk style; from the collaged collages and drooling resin layerings of German artist Sigmar Polke; from the elephants at London. Whipped and Berlin 200s whose dung is Ofili's calling-card. Its use is itself a borrowing

from black American artist David Hammons. Ofili's originality lies in his joyous orchestration of these disparate elements. His cartoon superhero, Captain Shit, painted in parody of 1970s "blaxploitation" movies, and of the sharply dressed gangsta heroes of rap music, actually glows in the dark.

Troubling for some audiences has been Ofili's paintings of a Black Virgin, whom he paints surrounded by collaged-on body parts snipped from pornographic magazines.

The Black Virgin has a venerable place in Catholic iconography, and the sexu-

ality of the Virgin has been a consistent, if often covert, theme of European religious painting since the Renaissance.

Ofili's paintings are often humorous and always visually complex, entertaining and arresting. His work has a more serious purpose than to shock.

With his wraparound glasses and lime green Ford Capri, he plays up the stereotype of the bad-ass black artist. But unlike an earlier generation of black artists in Britain, he is not interested in the polemics of political correctness, preferring beguilement and a self-consciously over-the-

top exoticism to outright political statement.

Never the less, his painting No Woman No Cry (the title of which is taken from the Bob Marley song) in the Turner Prize show is a portrait of a woman shedding tears, and in each tear is a tiny portrait of black murder victim Stephen Lawrence.

The painting is dedicated to Lawrence's mother. The words "No Woman No Cry" are picked out in coloured pine stuck into the balls of dung at the painting's feet.

The Tate put a reserve on the painting some weeks ago. Chris Ofili truly deserves the prize.

Big increase in out-patient waiting lists

David Brindle, Social Services Correspondent

THE number of people having to wait more than six months to see a hospital specialist, a breach of the Patient's Charter, has soared almost 16 per cent in three months.

The rise will lend support to claims that the Government is cutting waiting lists for operations – in pursuit of its pre-election promise to reduce them by 100,000 – only by allowing backlogs to build up elsewhere.

Figures due out today are expected to show that in-patient waiting lists in England fell in October for the sixth successive month and now stand at their lowest since June last year.

However, out-patient statistics show that 126,000 people have been waiting more than 26 weeks for a first appointment with a specialist. As many as 497,000 have been waiting more than 13 weeks. Both figures, for the end of September, are up 15.6 per cent on those for the end of June.

Under the charter, which the Government is to replace, "everyone can expect to be seen within 26 weeks" – a standard described when it was set in 1995 as an initial target to be tightened further.

The increase in out-patient waiting times was last night described as "deeply worrying" by Claire Rayner, who chairs the Patients Association pressure group.

"I have said from the beginning that I don't give a damn about the length of the waiting list. What I do care about, and what patients care about, is the length of waiting time," she said.

"On this basis, it looks as if some places are massaging their figures, bunching people waiting to get into out-patients, because once they are there they are going to swell the waiting list for surgery."

Anthony Harrison, fellow in health policy analysis at the King's Fund research institute, said the rise in out-patient waits was a predictable consequence of the drive to cut in-patient lists. But it

Waiting lists

Number of patients still waiting to be seen following a GP-written referral, September 30 1998

Waiting between 13 and 25 weeks Still waiting over 26 weeks

Region	Waiting between 13 and 25 weeks	Still waiting over 26 weeks
Northern & Yorkshire	35,000	16,000
Trent	34,000	20,000
Anglia & Oxford	32,000	13,000
North Thames	55,000	14,000
South Thames	36,000	12,000
South & West	36,000	20,000
West Midlands	30,000	9,000
North West	52,000	19,000



'I don't give a damn about the length of the waiting list. What I care about is the length of waiting time'

Claire Rayner

was due to a behavioural reaction, rather than any "fiddling" of figures.

"Putting pressure on at the treatment stage was always going to squeeze the system further back, even if only in the sense that surgeons doing more operations are doing less in out-patients," Mr Harrison said.

According to the Department of Health, the problem stems from a sudden, unexplained increase in the number of patients being referred to specialists. When self-referrals and referrals by other specialists are taken into account, 65,000 more out-patients were seen in the quarter to the end of September than in the equivalent period last year.

A department spokesman said: "There is no question of any slowdown in the number of patients seen."

However, compared with a year ago, fewer out-patients (1.9 million) were seen in the September quarter after written referral by their GP.

Today's provisional in-patient figures are expected to show that the total waiting list for treatment fell below 1.3 million in October. Ministers are committed to cutting it to below 1.1 million.

Paul Burstow, Liberal Democrat social services spokesman, said: "Judging by their own figures, the Government is in danger of spending so much money on tackling waiting lists that waiting times will go through the roof."

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People are coming round to Wogan because, with no disrespect to his skills, the alternatives are so much worse. As he was making gentle sport with listeners who had responded to his request for a catchphrase one morning, the team on the Chris Evans show were talking about "whacking off" and getting drunk on moonshine jelly.

Portrait, G2 page 4

The UK will not be one of the nations launching the euro, but many fear the Government will join soon

Push to harmonise taxes in Europe

Tax harmonisation

	UK position	Speculation	Fact	Likely outcome
VAT	Exemption/lower rates on some items	End to exemption/lower rates	EC wants harmonisation	Eventual harmonisation
Energy	Existing carbon tax	Green regime	EC wants harmonisation	Eventual energy tax
Excise duty	Some higher rates	EC wants harmonisation	EC wants harmonisation	No harmonisation in foreseeable future
Corporate tax	Among lowest rates in EU	EU to force higher rates	Germany seeking harmonisation	Unlikely in face of UK veto
Income tax	Relatively low rates	Rates to rise	Germany hinting at harmonisation	Not nearer even without UK veto
Savings	Withholds tax but Eurobond exemption	20% flat rate	UK fighting to keep exemption	Flat rate, UK opt-out for Eurobond interest
Duty free	To go in 1999	Temporary reprieve	UK joining calls to postpone abolition	To go
Tax breaks	85 up for discussion includes 10 in UK, for example...			
Film industry	More tax relief on capital spending	To go	Under discussion	To go



A Dover-Calais ferry laden with cheap booze. Harmonising excise taxes would bring some UK rates down, not least on alcohol and petrol

Proposals could spell the end of Britain's VAT exemptions

Mark Miller
Deputy Financial Editor

THE Euro-taxman cometh, we are told, threatening everything including VAT exemptions on children's clothes. Britain's status as a favoured destination for inward investment and the jobs of young men in striped suits and highly coloured braces in the City of London's bond markets.

Anyone reading some recent reports could be forgiven for thinking that Brussels has launched an all-out assault to revamp Britain's tax system according to an EU-wide bureaucratic blueprint.

So what is really going on?

The answer is that there are two separate strands to the future over tax: one domestic, one European.

Take the domestic issue first. In a month's time, 11 European countries will launch the euro, the single European currency. One big consequence is that from January 1, 1999, interest rates in the so-called euro-zone will be set by central bankers sitting at the top of a tower block in Frankfurt, the financial capital of Germany.

The UK will not be among the 11 nations launching the euro, but there are many Euro-sceptics in Britain who fear that sooner rather than later the Government will join — despite the Blair administration's assertions that Britain will seek membership only if monetary union meets five economic criteria and if Parliament and people, via a referendum, agree.

They fear that handing over the conduct of monetary policy — setting interest rates — to the central bankers in Frankfurt means a huge surrender of sovereignty, allowing decisions which are vital to Britain which are currently taken in Britain to be taken elsewhere.

More immediately, they are concerned that although the Government has laid down conditions for signing up for monetary union it is pushing the idea that membership is both desirable and inevitable. Now, however, they believe the European Commission's

Britain, with a veto on tax change, is not as vulnerable as sceptics claim

single market commissioner, Mario Monti, and the German finance director, Oskar Lafontaine, have handed them the means to derail an apparently seamless run towards euro membership.

In broad terms the tax debate can be summed up in one word, harmonisation — in crude terms, bringing UK tax rates into line with those elsewhere in Europe. Mr Monti, for example, is keen to harmonise VAT, energy and excise duties. Mr Lafontaine wants to bring corporate taxes into line, to introduce a Europe-wide withholding tax — tax deducted at source — on savings, and is reported to have added income tax to his wish list.

Euro-sceptics have been quick to pounce, arguing that VAT harmonisation will mean, among other things,

dearer food and children's clothes, that withholding tax will hit trading in Euro-bonds, centred in the City, with the loss of jobs and earnings. Harmonising corporate taxes will mean higher UK taxes, removing a competitive edge in the battle to lure inward investment, and a further surrender of sovereignty. And what could be more potent a weapon in the anti-euro propaganda battle than the thought of higher income tax?

It is not just a question of the UK against the rest. The debate embraces the idea of ending some 85 tax breaks, only 10 of which are in operation in the UK.

Nor is it a one-way street. Harmonising excise taxes, for example, would bring some UK rates down, not least on alcohol and petrol.

Nor is Britain as vulnerable to Brussels/Bonn schemes as the Euro-sceptics would suggest. EU rules mean that Britain has a veto on tax changes. Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, has been quick to insist that fiscal policy is a matter for him, not his counterparts in Europe.

But why are the Europeans suddenly trying to push the tax agenda forward? To an extent they are only carrying on an existing trend. Brussels has been trying to harmonise some tax rates for years.

The argument is that different rates of tax may "distort" decision making, persuading people to make different choices from those they would have made if tax rates had been equal.

For Mr Monti a level tax playing field in areas like excise duty and VAT will make the single market work better.

Mr Lafontaine's intervention is somewhat different. He is widely tagged as a "tax and spend" finance minister, but his two key concerns are more than Old Labour with a German accent.

Germany is worried that low rates of corporation tax in places like Ireland and Belgium, rather than the United Kingdom, put it at a disadvantage. It wants a Euro-wide withholding tax to stop German savers from sticking their cash into offshore accounts and dodging the German tax authorities.

Ian Traynor profiles the German minister, dubbed the European from Hell, who is pitching for a level playing field, which would mean the end of tax havens

OSKAR Lafontaine's love affair with France is aesthetic, culinary and political. The German social democratic leader and finance minister speaks fluent French.

His offices in Bonn serve the best French food and wine available in the city beyond the confines of the French ambassador's sumptuous residence. He is a fan of the French elite's dirigiste manner of conducting affairs.

And yesterday his Franco-philia received another boost when a summit of the French and German governments in Potsdam — Mr Lafontaine's first formal summit with the French — agreed to strengthen ties by sitting a Franco-German university in Saarbrücken, Mr Lafontaine's home town on the French border.

Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and his main adviser, Bodo Hombach, both on the right of the SPD, may harbour ambitions to upgrade Germany's relations with Britain, inevitably at the expense of the traditionally close ties with France. But Mr Lafontaine is having none of it.

For the past three years France and Germany have been fighting fiercely over the right to run the single European currency — known as the stability pact — the powers of the European central bank, and the relationship between monetary, fiscal and economic policymaking.

Suddenly the row is over since Mr Lafontaine espouses the central bankers, calling for co-ordination of monetary and economic policy, and augmenting the stability pact with a European "jobs pact" which turns employment and economic growth into paramount goals of the EU parallel to the central bank's duties of ensuring monetary stability and low inflation. Mr Lafontaine, 55, married to the economist Christa Müller with whom he co-authored a recent book on globalisation and who has been generating negative headlines in Germany because of her alleged influence on the finance minister, has erupted on to the German national and European political stages since the SPD election triumph in September.

He has quickly become the European from Hell for the British tabloid and Eurosceptic media because, uniquely among a Schröder administration that appears indecisive,

sive and unprepared for power, he knows what he wants, how to go about getting it, and relishes the rows and controversies he inspires.

He picked a fight over interest rates with the German central bank — not usually advisable in Germany. But his real target is the European central bank which will be running the single currency from January.

He has also sparked a row through his advocacy of "harmonised taxes" on companies and on interest earnings across the European Union.

All the dynamism and substance visible from the government ranks over the past month have been initiated by Mr Lafontaine.

He beefed up his own portfolio powers at the expense of the economics ministry by insisting on being given the latter's responsibility for European economic policy making.

Armed with these new powers,

He picked a fight over interest rates — but his real target is the European central bank

ers, he promptly began laying out his vision of "a more social Europe", reflected in yesterday's Franco-German call for "progress also in the social dimension of European unification."

Ultimately, he wants a level playing field across the European Union or the single currency. He wants to see competitive advantages in fiscal, investment, and wages policy for member states. That means tax havens like the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, and Luxembourg, have to go.

It also means, in stark contrast to the government of Helmut Kohl which wanted to keep employment policy under national remit, Europe-wide macro-economic policies aimed at creating jobs and triggering growth.

All the signs are that Mr Lafontaine will embark seriously on his agenda with the launch of the euro next month as it coincides with Germany's EU presidency.

Brown backs 'doomed' effort to delay end of duty-free

Stephen Bates in Brussels

THE Chancellor Gordon Brown yesterday gave his backing to German efforts to postpone the abolition of duty-free sales but warned the move was unlikely to succeed.

The European Union agreed in 1991 to scrap the £1 billion-a-year duty-free sales industry next summer, despite warnings of job losses, including up to 20,000 in the UK, and higher fares as ferry companies and airport operators tried to compensate for lost revenue.

But yesterday Mr Brown said: "We have always said that there were an opportunity to look at this again we were prepared to do so. The British Government's position has been consistent. Where there is unanimity we would support it. But I don't want to raise anyone's expectations."

Until the German election campaign this summer, Germany supported abolition and only Ireland was calling for a review. Now Gerhard Schröder's government has said it

would like a review. And French prime minister Lionel Jospin has commissioned one of his MPs, who represents Calais, to conduct a jobs assessment on the effect of abolition.

The European Commission, which still strongly supports abolition in the face of a concerted lobbying campaign by the industry and transport unions, has refused to reopen the issue. Brussels officials claim that many goods on offer could be bought more cheaply elsewhere.

The Commission argues that duty-free is an outdated tax concession which benefits only the minority of citizens who travel abroad, for which those who stay at home have to pay in higher costs. And it says the industry will have had eight years to prepare, pointing out it has spent the time building more shopping malls in terminals instead.

Yesterday's move by the chancellor is widely seen as a shift in stance with officials admitting it is a diversionary tactic. "We have to have something to give the punters back home. It won't go anywhere," one official said.

German candour on tax plans upsets Blair

Latest move in integration drive puts London on defensive

Michael White
Political Editor

NOT for the first time in Britain's turbulent post-war relations with its cousins across the Channel, the Government was last night forced on to the defensive as France and Germany raced ahead towards yet another distant Euro-goal.

This time it was tax harmonisation, an ambition restated by Gerhard Schröder and Lionel Jospin at their



French prime minister Lionel Jospin, French president Jacques Chirac, and German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder at a Potsdam press conference yesterday

Potsdam summit with an added flourish from Germany's finance minister, Oskar Lafontaine, that the EU rules should be changed so that unanimity is no longer required among the EU 15 to pursue that goal.

The harmonisation of key tax policies — the next step after next month's arrival of the single currency — is the latest move in the steady drive towards European integration which has been the hallmark of the Franco-Ger-

man alliance since Adenauer and de Gaulle buried their countries' ancient enmities with an embrace 40 years ago.

British diplomats insist they have no ambition to damage that alliance, "qualitatively different from all other relations in Europe because of their bad relations in the past", as one put it last night.

It is also the core of EU stability. Whatever friendly overtures Mr Schröder's new centre-left regime makes

towards London, Britain has opted to stay out of the single currency and is thus excluded from the Euro-X committee and the Central Bank which will manage and monitor its progress. No amount of Treasury verbiage can disguise the price of self-exclusion. Most British governments have dragged their heels, then joined Europe late on Europe's terms, since the 1950s. Except for its upbeat rhetoric Tony Blair's government is no different.

All the same, for Mr Blair yesterday's tax candour was the kind of embarrassment

which John Major routinely suffered and Margaret Thatcher relished. Contrary to the Prime Minister's cherished hope, to restore Britain's reputation as a constructive but distinctive Euro-player, it created the familiar impression that London is again being sidelined by Bonn-Paris axis.

Subject to the promised referendum Britain will eventually join the single currency on Europe's terms. That too is a familiar story.

Low humidity makes the salt-rich Parma hills ideal for curing. There are 5,600 recognised pig breeders and 220 slaughterhouses. Laws regulate the type of pigs used, their rearing conditions, diet and slaughtering procedures.

Since the 1980s the Consorzio has launched 200 sets of legal proceedings outside Italy to protect its name.

Yesterday's ruling was just

one in a series of wrangles involving food sold under the name of an area. European laws protect the names of certain famous products, including Champagne and cheeses such as Stilton, Swaledale and Single Gloucester.

The same rules have prevented Judy Bell, a Yorkshire farmer, from selling feta cheese, which can apply only to sheep or goat milk churned in Greece. Pending an appeal

this month, Mrs Bell has also been stopped from calling her product Yorkshire Fetta or Feta.

The name Cheddar has become so widely used that the EU says it cannot stop other producers from using it.

Brewers such as Newcastle Brown Ale, Kentish Ale and Rutland Bitter are protected. A French effort to end restrictions on Cornish clotted cream has recently failed.

Court victory for supermarket chain in 'barmy Parma drama'

Rory Carroll

ITALIAN meat producers yesterday lost a renewed court attempt to ban the Asda supermarket chain from slicing and packing Parma ham in Britain.

The Court of Appeal rejected a complaint from the Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma, a trade association, that Asda's product was not

genuine because it was processed outside the Parma region in the Po Valley.

Asda celebrated by setting up a stall outside the law courts in London with a placard hailing the end of "The Barmy Parma Drama".

The three judges upheld a High Court ruling in January that the chain, which buys from one of the highest producers in Parma, could use the name Parma ham even

though the air-cured meat was sliced and packed by Hygrade Foods Ltd of Corsham, Wiltshire.

An Asda spokesman said it was a victory for the consumer. "Our product is priced at 2.89p per gram, while our competitors sell it at around 3.84p. This action was about us trying to bring down the price of shopping for UK consumers."

"Whether it be in Parma, Pudsey, Plymouth or Perth,

with the full backing of today's ruling we will continue to slice and pack our ham wherever we can guarantee to keep prices permanently low."

According to Italian law, the ham must be fully prepared for sale in Parma under the control of the Consorzio, which has police-like powers to enforce the rules.

The Consorzio, which was refused leave to appeal to the

House of Lords, had argued that it was backed by European Union regulations which protect the designations of origin of agricultural products and foodstuffs.

The judges agreed the regulations made Parma ham a protected designation of origin but did not apply to rules on slicing and packing.

The Italians had claimed that Parma ham's reputation as a delicacy depended on

producers' rigorous controls.

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The Guardian Wednesday December 2 1998

BRITAIN 5

Attacking roots of problems



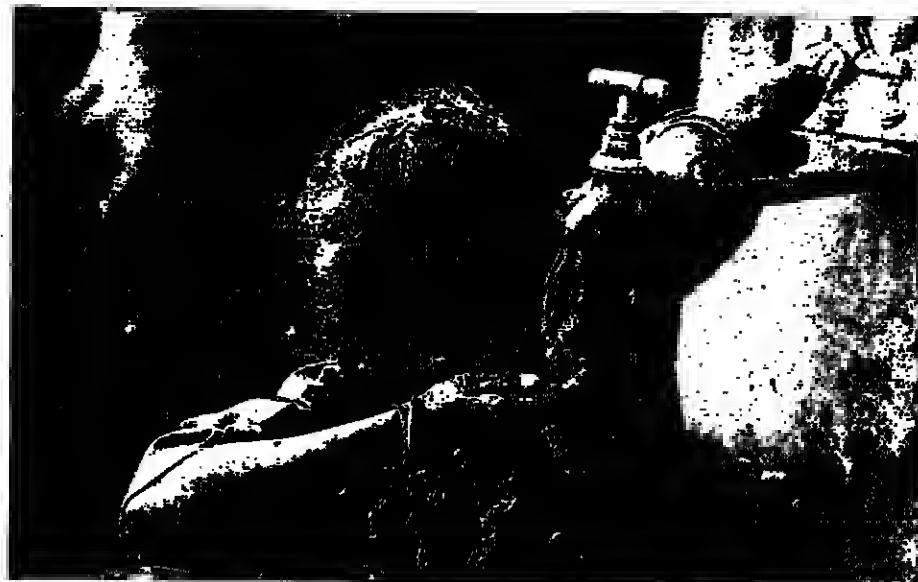
THE Guardian is launching its first Christmas appeal for charities today, in response to requests from readers. National surveys show Guardian readers are twice as likely as the average to give donations to charity. Now is your chance to reaffirm the evidence of these surveys, which suggest our readership donates more

than £53 million to charity every year. We have selected three small but growing charities. Each tackles root causes, rather than just applying palliatives to serious problems. They are widely respected within the charity world. We have intentionally selected charities representing quite distinct areas — domestic poverty, overseas aid, and the environment. We are also giving readers a further option of supporting this year's winners of the Guardian Jerwood award, the leading annual competition for small charities. Details of each are provided below, and further reports will follow over the next few weeks. Readers can send in a general donation, which will be distributed among all the charities, or specify the FSU, WaterAid or the Soil Association. Further donation details are on this page.

The charities you will be supporting

Family Service Units
The Family Service Units work to support Britain's poorest families and provides emergency and long term services in some of the country's most deprived inner city areas. The FSU delivers help at grassroots level — offering support or counselling for people experiencing such difficulties as domestic violence, bullying, or coping with mental health problems or AIDS. They also work to help young people from deprived families get a good start in life, organising parenting classes, helping with creches, offering pre-school support, and help-

ing disaffected adolescents excluded from school. They also provide emergency support, offering everything from communal washing machines and telephones, to advice on who can help with benefits claims. "While we recognise that the nature of poverty has changed over the years, its results for families are the same: inequality, lack of opportunity and social exclusion. Very few in our society actually suffer hunger, but poor housing and malnutrition due to poor diet are still prevalent," said Naomi Eisenstadt, the FSU chief executive. The FSU has defied critics by dem-



Water aid... Big benefits at relatively low cost



The Soil Association... Has been championing organic farming since 1945



Family Service Units... Grassroots help in some of the most deprived areas

onstrating that it is possible to prevent family breakdown by offering support to help people survive their problems.

WaterAid
Some 1.4 billion people — a quarter of the world's population — cannot pour themselves a glass of clean water. More than 2 billion do not have access to proper sanitation. And every hour about 600 people die because the available water is contaminated, inadequate or non-existent.

But WaterAid stresses the situation can be radically improved relatively cheaply.

It provides clean, safe drinking water to developing countries. It works with communities, providing them with equipment and skills to build and maintain systems.

But because health improvements do not come from clean water alone, WaterAid also installs effective sanitation systems and tries to improve public hygiene through education programmes.

"The vital, gut-wrenching point is that there are more than a billion people in the world who do not have access to clean water," said John Lane, the director. "In a society where we have found water on the moon, I find that a staggering and totally unacceptable inequality."

Clean water and the health improvements which come with it provide a sound base for future development.

"It forms a vital building block for everything else these people want to do to change their lives," Mr Lane said. "And because the systems are so cost-effective, pouring 10 is enough on average to set up one person with water supplies."

The Soil Association
The association has been championing organic farming in Britain since 1945, and studies the impact modern agriculture has on the health of humans and animals and on the environment.

It has recently turned its attention to campaigning against genetic engineering and the use of antibiotics in intensive farming.

Patrick Holden, director of the Soil Association, said: "BSE and all the other recent food crises have shocked the public into an awareness that something is fundamentally wrong with our agriculture."

"The Soil Association is not about providing organic food for middle class people who can afford it. It is a question of fundamentally changing agricultural practice, which we believe will be beneficial to everyone's health."

"For 52 years we have been arguing that intensive farming is not compatible with

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Minister overrode advice to ban offal

James Melville

JOHN MacGregor will tell the BSE inquiry today that he went over the heads of scientific advisers to ban beef offal from food supplies in 1989 because he was worried about seemingly healthy cattle infecting humans. The former agriculture minister, responsible for the key plank in limiting the risk of catching human BSE, said in a written statement last night that the action was needed "to reassure the public and safeguard public health". He was particularly concerned that offal was going into food from cattle that did not show classic "mad cow" signs but were still incubating the disease.

The move is hailed as the most important measure of the BSE crisis, helping to prevent complete meltdown of the industry when the link between BSE and its human equivalent, new variant CJD, was acknowledged in 1996. Because of long incubation periods, the 32 people who have died of the disease are assumed to have been infected in the 1980s, even though it has become clear that rules enforcing the ban in slaughterhouses were flouted in later years. In 1989, independent advisers on the Southwood committee and some senior civil servants saw no reason to recommend such prohibition. Mr MacGregor, who will give oral evidence to the inquiry today, is now given much of the credit for insisting on the

measure. But he said in his statement there had been "considerable speculation" about who originally proposed the ban. "I suspect... a number of us, including myself, came independently to the conclusion that this was the right way to proceed." Sir Richard Southwood's committee, which reported in February 1989, had suggested that baby food manufacturers should avoid such offal but had not recommended a legal ban. Mr MacGregor thought legislation necessary — and quickly considered whether a wider ban should be imposed. He sought other scientific arguments and by early June his vets provided him with a list of parts of the animal where the infective agent for BSE might be present before the disease became obvious.

In a meeting with Sir Richard on June 9, the minister pointed to several concerns, including growing consumer pressure for an offal ban and the inability to control every market and slaughterhouse. Mr MacGregor's statement said: "Although we held very firmly to the view that action should be based on the best scientific evidence, the combination of all these other factors suggested there was a case for going wider than baby food and banning the 'Southwood' offal of all bovine animals." The former minister said Sir Richard described the recommendation on baby food as "a counsel of extreme prudence" and that "if one took further action without scientific evidence, it would be difficult to decide where the line should be drawn".

NFU's sunnier outlook after 1998 slump

James Melville

FARMERS' leaders yesterday talked of bouncing back from the worst crisis since the 1930s, even as new estimates underlined their financial problems. Falls in income this year of a third or a half — depending on key indicators of the health of farming — were predicted, but the National Farmers' Union said next year could be brighter. The recent weakening of the pound, the world prices recovery and the resumption

of beef exports next year all offered hope, as Nick Brown, the Agriculture Minister, called on the industry to work to end farming's boom-bust record of recent years. For the UK's total income from farming in 1998, the Government forecast a drop of a third, from about £24 billion to £23.3 billion — a figure based on the net income to farmers and their partners, directors, spouses and other family workers. The NFU argued that a truer figure of just over £1.1 billion — would emerge if farm incomes were stripped of the labour contribution of the farmers' families and colleagues. Both figures include most of the £120 million rescue package that will help cut expected losses for hill farms but do little for much of the industry.

Doctors urge babywalkers to be banned

Sarah Boseley Health Correspondent

BABYWALKERS should be banned, say doctors, because they cause many injuries to small children, who are often left in them unsupervised by parents unaware of the dangers. In one of two articles on the issue in the journal Injury Prevention, published today, Denise Kendrick of the division of general practice at Nottingham university medical school said parents thought of walkers as a means of keeping the child quiet and safe and encouraging them to be mobile. But according to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, about 4,000 children a year are injured in them.

one to three years showed that the 50 per cent who used the walkers were likely to be careless of safety in other respects, such as not having a stairgate or a fire guard. They did not consider their children to be at higher risk of head injuries, fractures, bruises and burns.

In the American study, most parents thought babywalkers were good for the child's development, when there was no evidence of this. "Paediatricians have repeatedly stated that infant walkers have no value and increase injuries," said Miriam Bar-on and colleagues at Louisiana state university school of medicine in New Orleans. "The American Academy of Paediatrics recommends a ban on the manufacture and sale of infant walkers."

The Nottingham research showed that two thirds of children who suffered a walker-related injury continued to be placed in them, said the authors, who recommended a return to the playpen for parents who use walkers for "baby-sitting".

RoSPA said some walkers did not meet the British standards laid down for manufacturers. David Jenkins, the society's product safety adviser, said it first became concerned 20 years ago after a child crashed through a glass door in a babywalker. It had to be written on the packaging and on the walker that the baby must be supervised, he said.

Ancients top the philosophy ratings

John Ezard on how Plato and Aristotle beat 'overrated' Marx and Derrida

THOSE bearded 2,400-year-old Greeks Plato and Aristotle still rule the roost in philosophy. Karl Marx's reputation has withered away. Modernists like Derrida, Foucault and Sartre are dismissed as hopelessly over-inflated. These are the unexpected results of the biggest international opinion survey yet carried among philosophy students and academics. The findings, to be published on Friday, appear to undermine the view that recent linguistic or structuralist philosophers are gaining dominance on campuses. They also suggest that metaphysical issues about the meaning of life still preoccupy students and their teachers far more than questions of whether the world is socially constructed through words. The survey, by The Philosophers' Magazine, drew responses from 960 students and teachers. It places Aristotle and Plato clear top of those who have "contributed most to the advancement of human understanding". The most esteemed six were: Aristotle, 183 votes; Plato, 158; Kant, 152; Nietzsche, 114; Wittgenstein, 111; Hume, 99. The perennially controversial Friedrich

Nietzsche also came third in the list of most overrated philosophers. Wittgenstein, who wrote: "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent", is the only 20th century thinker in the pantheon. Last night Jeremy Stangroom, the magazine's co-founder, said this might be partly because Derek Jarman's 1993 film had given him a high profile. Though the magazine calls Jacques Derrida "an international icon of cultural studies" he easily topped with 106 votes, the poll on philosopher "whose contribution to the subject has been most overrated". Marx was second, with 90, followed by Nietzsche (87), Heidegger (76), Kant (71) and Descartes (66). Martin Heidegger, a once highly fashionable existentialist who died in 1976, remains tainted by charges of Nazi collaboration. Jean Foucault straddled both polls but attracted muted enthusiasm. He got only 26 votes among admired philosophers and 66 among the overrated. Votes were cast on the Internet and at philosophy conferences. Some 45 per cent of votes came from the United States, 15 per cent from Britain, 10 per cent

from Canada and most of the rest from Europe. Announcing the results, the magazine says they may reflect a degree of English-speaking bias. "Continental philosophy is notoriously sniffed at by Anglo-Saxon philosophers." However, voting patterns consistently showed Aristotle as the world's favourite philosopher and Derrida as the most inflated. The US was one of the countries where alarm was recently voiced at the spread of European linguistic approaches. In the last 18 months two science professors, Alan Sokal and Jean Bricmont, have caused academic uproar with their book Intellectual Impostures. This charges numerous European theorists with flagrantly misunderstanding science, especially physics, in their academic writings. Derrida's riposte to the book was to say: "Poor Sokal". Last night Dr Stangroom said the survey showed Sokal and Bricmont need not have worried. The European influence in intellectual circles had been over-estimated. On Karl Marx's poor showing, Dr Stangroom said: "Events in eastern Europe and the collapse of the Soviet Union have had a huge impact on his reputation." The Philosophers' Magazine can be ordered on www.philosophers.co.uk



Jacques Derrida: topped poll as the most overrated philosopher PHOTOGRAPH: STEVE PINE

Ulster peace talks leader hails unsung hero Major

Rory Carroll

GEORGE Mitchell, the former US senator who brokered Northern Ireland's Good Friday Agreement, will tonight depart from his trademark discretion and single out John Major as the unsung hero of the peace process. The former prime minister, accused of blundering because the IRA abandoned its first ceasefire, has been unfairly excluded from the adulation that has washed over

Tony Blair. Mr Mitchell says: "Because he first involved me in the process, and because I know him well, I have been disappointed that his contribution has not been properly recognised, especially in the US."

Concerned lest the present government should be the history books at the expense of those who did the donkey-work, he traces the Good Friday deal to the 1985 Anglo-Irish agreement and the Downing Street Declaration signed by Mr Major in 1993.

Brother of leading Iraqi dissident found dead

Richard Norton-Taylor

THE brother of the leader of an Iraqi opposition group backed by the CIA and MI6 has been found dead in the Jordanian capital Amman, having apparently committed suicide. But his death prompted speculation that he had been killed by agents of Saddam Hussein.

Enad Alawi, aged 55, the brother of Ayad Alawi who heads the Iraqi National Accord (INA), was found dead on Saturday with a gunshot wound to the head outside his Amman flat.

Jordanian security services were quoted yesterday as saying there was evidence of suicide. Enad Alawi, a businessman who left Iraq in 1995, was believed to have financial problems. Baghdad is understood to have confiscated his assets as a punishment for his brother's defection.

"Early indications are that it was suicide but we cannot confirm or deny it," a spokesman for the INA in London

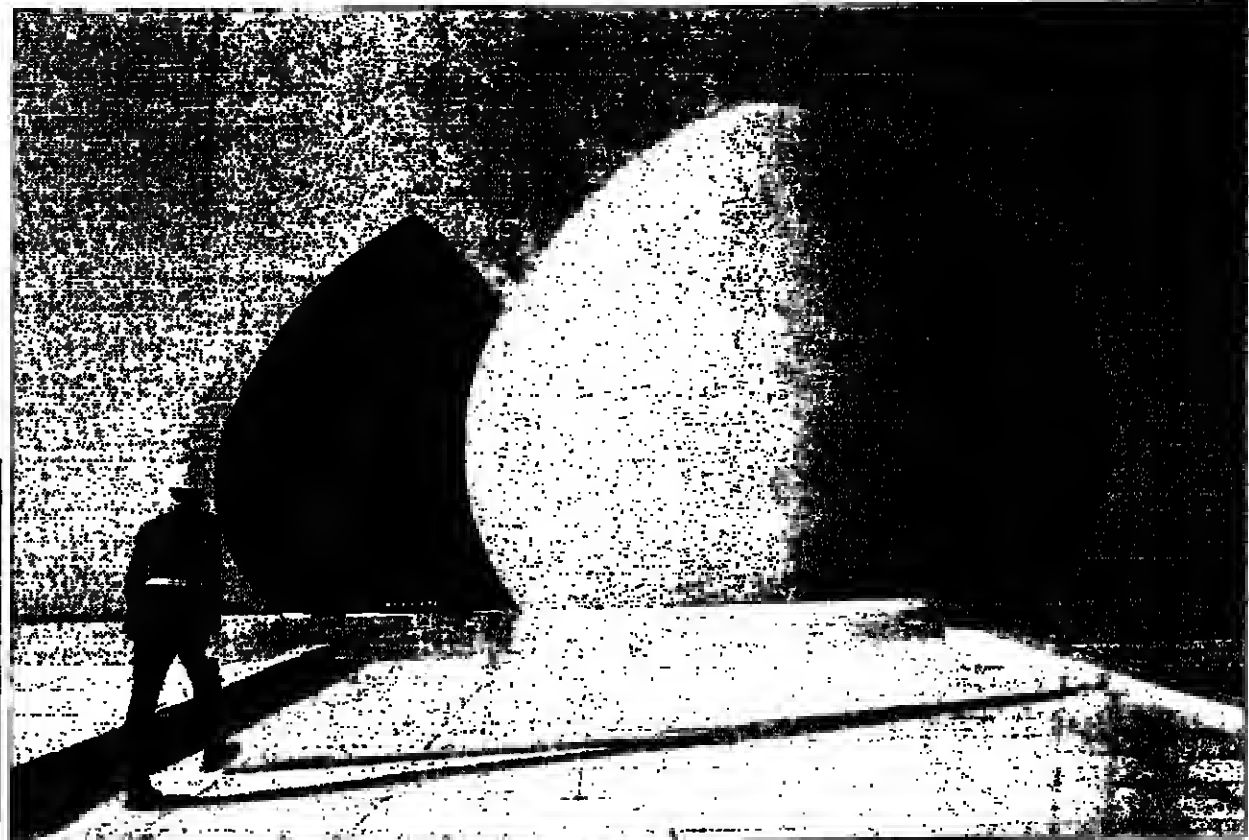
said yesterday. He said although Alawi was not active in the resistance movement, being related to a leader could have made him a target.

The London-based Al-Hayat newspaper yesterday quoted "independent sources" in Jordan as saying he had died in a way suggesting he was killed by agents on behalf of the Iraqi government.

In his first British newspaper interview, Ayad Alawi — who survived an assassination attempt in London in 1978 — told the Guardian last month: "We understand the power structure in Iraq, and our policy is to break it down so that Saddam will crack."

While Western intelligence agencies — including MI6 — value the INA's networks, its critics say the group is penetrated by Iraqi agents. A coup attempt by the INA in 1996 was foiled.

In London yesterday, promoters of Indict, a United States-funded campaign to place President Saddam and 12 of his associates on trial, said they believed the sudden decision by Barzan al-Tikriti,



An Iraqi guard of honour at the Martyrs Monument in Baghdad prepares for the ceremony. PHOTOGRAPH: YANNIS BEPAGIS

the Iraqi dictator's half-brother, to return to Iraq was prompted by fear of arrest. Mr Barzan recently left his post as Iraq's ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva.

Ann Clwyd, the Labour MP and chairperson on Indict, said: "We believe it is no coincidence that Barzan chose to return to Iraq for the first time in almost nine years, despite his very public feud

with Saddam's murderous son, Uday, at just the time that Indict had commenced proceedings against him."

Indict has recently been given \$3 million (£1.8 million) by the US Congress. Its press conference yesterday was attended by Ahmed Chalabi, president of the Iraqi National Congress, the most prominent opposition group and rival to the INA. Dr Chalabi has just returned from

Tehran.

Ms Clwyd said: "As head of Iraqi intelligence, [Barzan] was directly responsible for widespread acts of murder, torture, disappearances, extra-judicial executions, arbitrary detention and rape."

She said the campaign had been encouraged by the law lords' ruling last week that the former Chilean dictator General Augusto Pinochet did not have immunity from

extradition.

Apart from President Saddam and his sons Uday and Qusay, Indict's list includes Vice-President Taha Yassin Ramadan and the deputy prime minister, Tariq Aziz.

The London-based Iraqi Communist Party said yesterday that a general named Sami, who it said was a senior officer of protocol in the presidential palace, had been executed on November 19.

US inquiry widens to Clinton fundraising

Martin Kettle in Washington

THE Republican-controlled committee that is considering impeachment against President Bill Clinton moved to widen the scope of its inquiry yesterday, triggering fresh charges of political bias from Democrat opponents.

The Republicans used their majority on the House of Representatives judiciary committee to subpoena senior law enforcement officers, including the FBI director Louis L. Freeh, thus broadening the impeachment inquiry into a dispute over campaign fundraising. The vote of 20-15 went along party lines.

The moves angered Democrats, who accused the Republicans of trying to turn the country's most solemn constitutional process into what a senior Democrat, John Conyers, called "a partisan witch hunt".

The subpoenas focused on Clinton's administration memos urging the attorney general, Janet Reno, to appoint an independent counsel to investigate the president's 1996 campaign. The memos were written by Mr Freeh and the federal prosecutor, Charles LaBella.

The independent counsel Kenneth Starr was also subpoenaed to hand over evidence gathered from John Huang, a key suspect in the fundraising row.

Paul McNulty, a spokesman for the Republicans, said: "The committee has received information which suggests that the campaign-funding abuse memos may contain allegations of criminal wrongdoing by the president. The committee is duty bound to investigate that information."

The subpoenas follow a decision last week by the Washington federal judge Norma Holloway Johnson, who supervises the grand jury in the Starr investigation, that the memos were not relevant to the impeachment inquiry and should not be released.

Voting took place during a day of public hearings by the committee in Washington, where 12 witnesses gave evidence on the law of perjury. "We are not exercising or participating in a wild goose chase," the committee chair-

man, Henry Hyde, said. "We are not bound by the parameters of the Starr referral. And anything else that comes to our attention while we are still duly constituted, it seems to me, is justifiable."

The moves are a deliberately high-risk strategy to create a strongly partisan atmosphere in which to more easily vote articles of impeachment.

Voting is expected to take place on the committee in about 10 days, followed by a full House vote a few days later. The articles are expected to charge Mr Clinton with perjury, obstruction of justice and abuse of power in his handling of his relationship with the former White House intern Monica Lewinsky.

The Republican moves delighted their supporters and prompted a chorus of condemnation from the Democrats.

'We cannot play when you propose to overturn a national election'

"One week away from such a monumental vote is no time to commence an entirely new area of investigation into campaign finance," Mr Conyers told the committee.

Turning to Mr Hyde, he said: "We cannot play hide and seek when you propose to overturn a national election."

"Right now we're in chaos," complained the House Democrats' leader, Richard Gephardt, who called on the House Speaker-elect, Bob Livingston, to "take control" of the process.

The White House denounced the turn of events as "not a serious exercise".

The White House is still debating whether to accept Mr Hyde's invitation to give evidence to the committee. While Mr Clinton is certain not to give evidence, his lawyer, David Kendall, is expected to submit a statement of his defence in the next few days.

No decision has yet been made about whether Mr Kendall or the White House senior counsel Charles Ruff will appear in person.

Lebanese president sacks PM

David Hirst in Beirut

LEBANON'S new president, General Emile Lahoud, has sacked his prime minister, Rafiq Hariri, the billionaire tycoon who for the past six years has dominated the Lebanese political scene.

The president, who took office last week, has begun consultations to find a replacement. This is almost certain to be Salim al-Hoss, a softly spoken academic turned politician with a reputation for integrity, who served as prime minister four times during the civil war.

Seventy-one of the 128 MPs have now declared for him.

The change of prime ministers looks as though it will be as smoothly accomplished as it was wholly unexpected. It had been considered virtually certain that Gen Lahoud would retain Mr Hariri, whose departure might have adversely affected the economy. Gen Lahoud offered him the post. When Mr Hariri turned it down, it was believed to be a rumour. If so, it has backfired. And the national currency has so far held up.

The president's personal standing in public opinion was already high, but with this dramatic beginning to his presidency the Lebanese people have become hopeful that they will now enjoy a new, more responsible form of rule.

Ostensibly, the differences between the two men arose over the constitution and their different interpretations of the so-called Taif agreement that marked the end of the civil war in 1991. Mr Hariri said that the president — who by tradition is a Maronite Christian — was appropriating powers to choose a prime minister — always a Sunni Muslim — that properly belonged to parliament. But behind this lay a much deeper antagonism.

Gen Lahoud, a British-trained former army commander, is clearly determined to be no mere figurehead. Co-

existence between two such "titans", as the local press calls them, with such different political outlooks would have been very difficult. It was evidently vital for him to assert himself from the outset.

However, that he is doing so with such aplomb and apparent success is almost certainly because he has the backing of Syria's President Hafez al-Assad, the ultimate power-broker in Lebanon. Most pro-Syrian parliamentary factions, that formerly stood with Mr Hariri, have turned against him.

When he came to power in 1992 Mr Hariri was widely welcomed as a "saviour" who would restore Lebanon to its pre-war splendour and its status as capital of the Middle East. But his vast "infrastructure" projects brought little benefit to most Lebanese, whose living standards continued to decline. He favoured services over industry, finance over the wider economic interest; he neglected social services. Corruption, waste and bureaucratic inefficiency flourished.

In his inaugural address, which has been called the most "revolutionary" by Lebanese standards, Gen Lahoud electrified the people. "The thief will be punished, no matter who he is, along with the corrupt, the wasteful and those taking bribes." He promised social justice, and an end to the "politics of sectarianism".

This was taken to be a criticism not just of Mr Hariri's administration, but of the whole ruling class. Deputies applauded him enthusiastically, but Beirut newspapers said that if he were really going to "cut off" the thieves' hands there would hardly be anyone left to applaud him.

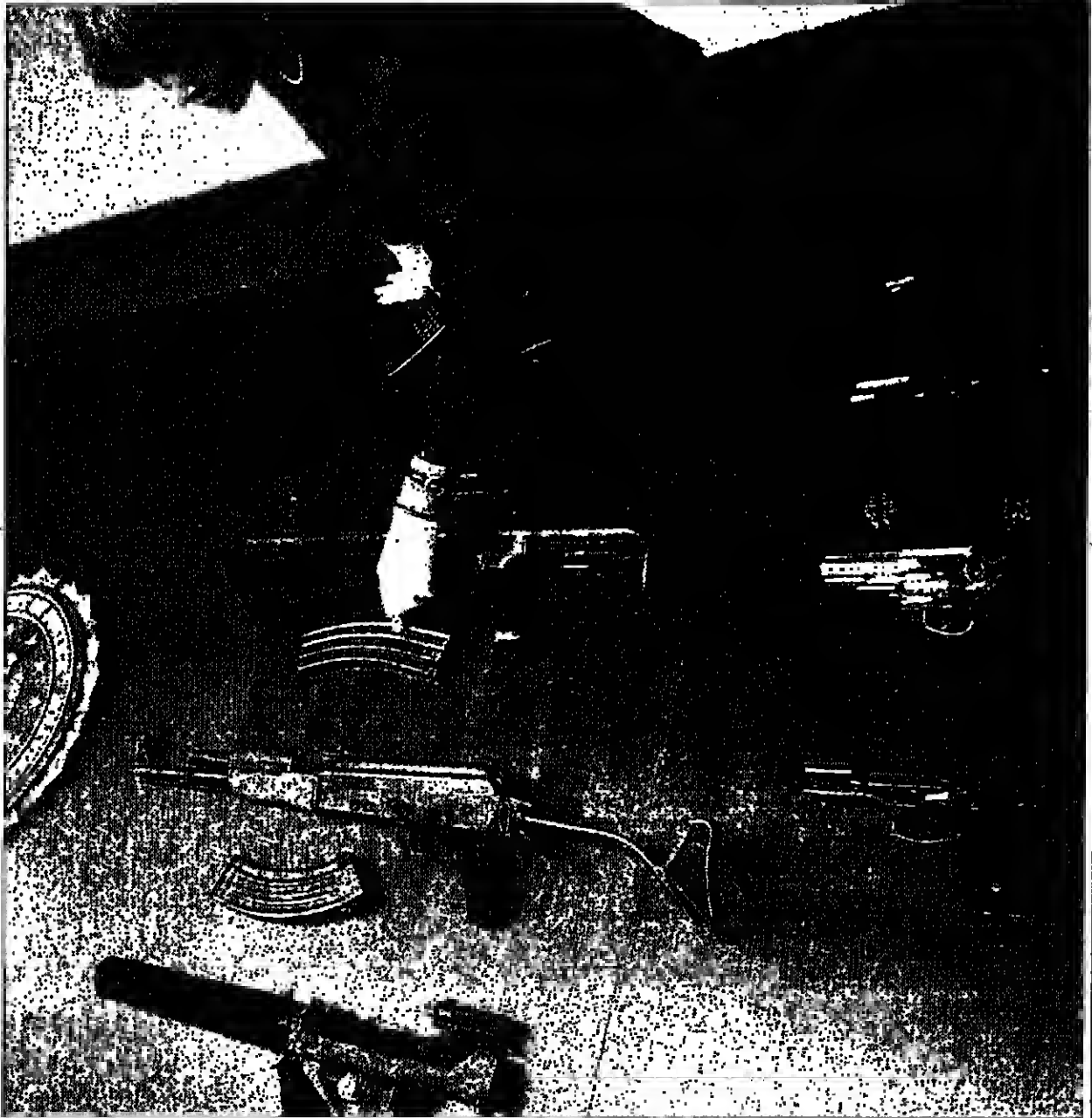
They also said it would be almost impossible for Mr Hariri to come up with a ministerial team matching up to these exacting new ethical standards. At the very least, if he did, his wings would be clipped. Evidently he preferred to quit.



Seth Privacky (below), accused of murdering five members of his family, including his parents (above). PHOTOGRAPHS: MUSKOGEE CHRONICLE



As another small town comes to terms with a multiple killing by disaffected teenagers, gun lobbyists go to court to defend Americans' inalienable right to bear arms, complaining that a new federal law makes buying weapons more difficult. **Michael Ellison** in New York reports



FBI special agent Linda Vizi shows weapons recovered during a shoot-out with police on the New Jersey Turnpike in September. They include an M-16, an AK-47, a Mac-11 and assorted pistols. PHOTOGRAPH: DANIEL HULSHED/AP

American gun clubs go to war on new law

UNITED STATES gun clubs went to court yesterday to fight for their inalienable right to bear arms on the same day as an 18-year-old was accused of shooting dead five members of his family.

The National Rifle Association (NRA) claimed that tight new laws on buying guns violated their privacy, a point lost on the people of Dalton, Michigan. Two school friends, Seth Privacky and Steven Wallace, are accused of murdering Seth's father, mother, grandfather, brother and his brother's girlfriend. There was no known motive.

Action by the NRA came as a national system was introduced to run instant background checks on people buying guns. It is aimed at

reducing the time taken to gather the information from five days to five minutes. Reasons for refusing a customer include criminal and domestic-violence convictions and mental illness.

The measure had an instant effect, but for the wrong reasons. Gun dealers around the country said they had trouble getting through to the Federal Bureau of Investigation phone bank handling the checks. Even when they did make a connection, the computer had stopped functioning.

"We're the biggest wholesaler and dealer in the state of Indiana and today we have not been able to sell one single shotgun because all the lines are busy," said Doug Keisler, owner of Keisler

Police Supply in Jeffersonville. Normally at this time of year — the hunting season — he sells about 25 shotguns a day.

The system checks buyers at the country's 105,000 licensed dealers against lists of people disqualified from owning guns. An FBI spokesman said that of 5,000 calls they received, 3,300 were approved, 19 rejected and the others delayed for more inquiries.

The checks were brought in under the terms of the Brady Law, named after the press secretary who was seriously wounded when John Hinckley tried to murder President Ronald Reagan in 1981. That law was passed nearly five years ago but recent events have given it more urgency.

Last March two boys, aged 12 and 13, dressed in camouflage and shot dead four pupils and a teacher in an ambush at their school in Jonesboro, Arkansas. Pupils at Westside middle school

'Today we have not been able to sell one single shotgun'

said they believed that the attack had been planned after a girl said she did not want to go out with one of the boys. The guns came from the home of the other boy's grandfather.

The Jonesboro killings were part of a series in schools over a six-month period that claimed 15 lives and included attacks in Mississippi, Kentucky and Oregon.

There are said to be guns in 40 per cent of American homes — 200 million weapons, or four for each child aged between six and 16. About 2,200 people aged between 10 and 19 commit suicide each year, two-thirds of them with a gun. More than 10,700 people are murdered with guns each year.

New Orleans and Chicago have taken out lawsuits against gun makers and it is thought that as many as 60 cities might follow suit. Chicago is claiming \$438 million (\$270 million) against the in-

dustry, claiming that it causes a public nuisance because of the extra costs to police, fire services and hospitals.

The NRA claims in its lawsuit that the checks under the new measure constitute a register of gun owners, contrary to federal law. The FBI says that this is not the purpose and that the information gathered would be used for statistical sampling and auditing.

But Handgun Control Inc, a pressure group based in Washington DC, says the new checks might make access to weapons easier for criminals, drug users and the mentally ill. It said the old five-day waiting rule was probably more thorough and provided a cooling-off period.

Iran debates female privacy over health

Genevieve Abdo in Tehran

MEDICAL rules guaranteeing privacy for women are about to take effect in Iran after years of debate. Female patients will soon be treated by women paramedics, able to buy personal items from women pharmacists and rest in hospital wards free of male intrusion.

Under a bill expected to take effect in the coming weeks, Iranian women will also gain a legal right to de-

mand treatment by female doctors. Whenever possible, female patients will be tended only by women staff.

But ideological purity has been modified by modern medical reality. Proponents of the bill initially demanded that no woman should be treated by a male doctor under any circumstance. They had to compromise because there are not enough women doctors in Iran to meet the demand.

The issue has triggered a national debate touching upon religion, culture and

whether men are more competent doctors than women. In Iranian society the "purity" of women is a priority; under Islamic law, women are obliged to wear veils and long clothes masking their bodies. Yet, there is a consensus that Islamic texts do not bar women from seeing male doctors.

Proponents of the changes, such as Marziyeh Vahid Dastjerdi, a gynaecologist and one of a handful of women MPs, say women should not be required to expose their bodies to men.

But critics of the bill argue that prudish women living in villages and small towns, who favour the measure, will lose out because in certain fields, such as neurology and brain science, there are far more male doctors than women.

Four thousand doctors and medical students signed a petition addressed to parliament, which listed their objections to the measures. They argued that a patient may fall under the knife of an overworked female surgeon, or endure long waits

for other types of treatment which could easily be provided by male medical staff.

"It is natural in any country for women to want to be given injections by other women and men to see male doctors, even in Europe," said Babak Qaraee Mogadam, a GP and board member of Iran's Medical Association.

"But there is a practical problem. There may be enough female doctors in cities, like Tehran, but there aren't enough in the countryside." In recent years, the

government has tried to address the shortage of female gynaecologists. After seven years of medical school, students must take an examination to become specialists. In the test for gynaecology, most women are accepted for a limited number of positions even when their scores are lower than those of male competitors.

The clash between medical reality and ideological concern is particularly acute in places such as fertility clinics.

In recent years, the

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Comment

Diary

Simon Bowers

A MESSAGE has been passed to the Diary on the economic advisor, Ed Balls, who has apparently lost his voice. It concerns yesterday's Diary report that, despite his unpopular efforts to sell off parts of the post office, he hopes to be parachuted into Bill O'Brien's Normanston seat — happy coincidence next door to that of his MP wife, Yvette Cooper. According to Ed, this is a rumour — first cited, you recall, in the Sunday Times — without foundation. Indeed it may be a Mandelsonian plot, he thinks, and could even hurt Yvette in Pontefract. Trust me, Ed, to harm Yvette is not our intention; however we must — and will — get to the bottom of this. In the meantime we've sent Ed a pack of cough sweets for his throat.

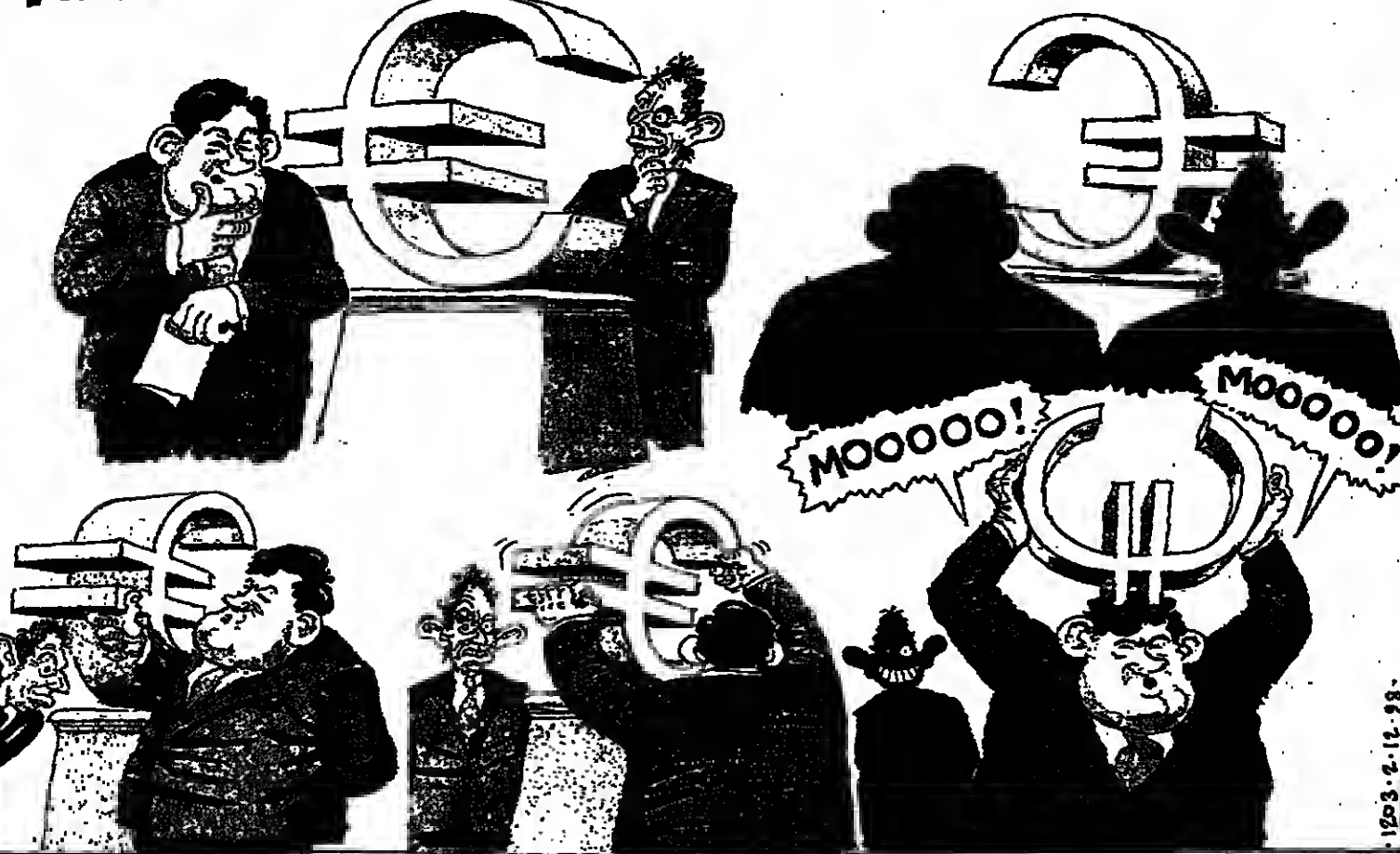
SAYING with Mr Balls, we are reminded of an intriguing exchange between him and Bill Morris this summer. The Treasury team had booked several boxes at the Albert Hall for various guests during the Euros — the TGWU chief among them. Gordon, being sponsored by the TGWU, was naturally anxious to make a good impression, so you can imagine his horror when Ed — presumably carried away by the passion of the music — bawled from his box: "We didn't stick you on the court of the Bank of England to criticise government economic policy." Unexpectedly, however, Bill's reply was politeness itself. "We'll talk about this later, Ed," he said. Stranger still, not the slightest murmur of dissent is now to be heard from Bill, who breakfasts with Ed on a monthly basis these days. What an intriguing young chap Bally is.

ANOTHER scurrilous rumour is festering around Murdoch's Wapping base. It concerns an intimate encounter in the mirrored aerobics hall next to the fourth-floor gym over a fortnight ago between a Sun employee and another News International worker. Had they been of differing sexes it might, perhaps, have made a splendid News of the World feature, however this not being the case, management — under pressure to observe Mr Yeland's new anti-outing policy — thrust the two gentlemen instead. We ring Jane Reed, NI corporate affairs director, and ask her to put a stop to this gossip. "Sex in the gym. Yes, yes — that rumour has been flying around here for quite a while," she says with a laugh. "There's no truth in it. Certainly no one has been sacked." Say no more, Jane. We'll draw a line under these unpleasant whispers here and now.

OUR attention has been drawn to a delightful match-making agency on the Florida based Stormfront website. "Use White Singles to meet like-minded people for friendship and love" suggests the home page. Female readers may be interested to learn that Dwayne from New York is 24; he likes ice fishing, American football and wants to meet a "racially aware woman who must truly believe in the sanctity of family and in the truth of racial superiority". Or perhaps David, an ex-military man from California, appeals. He is upset, reveals Scotland on Sunday, because most women he meets are "race traitors and psycho sluts". Bless their lovesick cottons.

YESTERDAY we reported that while the nation's celebrations for Prince Charles's 50th birthday show no signs of abating, for unemployed musician Ryan Hooper of Roxburghshire, they have been cruelly tarnished. Having told his local job centre that he was to play for the Prince at Buckingham Palace, you may recall, they docked his sole £50. However, reports the Daily Record, on reading of Ryan's plight, Palace press secretary Penny Russell-Smith's heart melted and a cheque for the sum was duly dispatched. "It was really nice of the Palace to get in touch like that," said rocker Ryan, "as I thought I'd never hear from them ever again." Meanwhile a spokeswoman from the Benefits Agency said Ryan was still obliged to declare the cheque to them.

TURNER PRIZE — LATE ENTRY



Praying to Mecca under a bust of Palmerston. It's New Labour at work

Jonathan Freedland



WHO says politics is dead? It's certainly alive and well in this room — which is, by now, bubbling with conflict. There are three, maybe four stand-up rows going on at once, each one pitting two of the world's most ancient faiths against each other. "I'll see you on the battlefield, my friend," says a young Muslim man, his voice strong with anger, addressing a Jew roughly his own age. "I might have to take your head off, but for the sake of Islam, I'll do it. I shall fight and fight until I die."

Nearby, a Jew in a skull-cap is explaining the Jewish demand for a homeland to a Muslim student. "You guys always revert to that in the end," says the Muslim. "To Hitler and the Holocaust." Meanwhile, just over his shoulder, there's a loud declaration that "Jihad is life."

All this drama, crammed into a weekday evening in a back room at London University. The occasion is the founding meeting of the Calamus-Maimonides Student Forum, a new group which wants Jews and Muslims, so long at war, to talk to each other face to face. It's an event which has been years in the making, the fruit of secret talks between the two sides whose clashes on campus over recent years have been bitter and even violent. To the untrained eye, this meeting would have looked like more of the same: a failure.

But there were two signs of hope. The first was the treatment of the extremists. It turns out they were from a notorious student faction, Al-Muhajiroun, that aligns itself with the hardest edge of hard-

line Islam. As soon as they revealed themselves, heckling from the floor, they were turned on and shouted down — not by Jews, but by their fellow Muslims. Moderates from that community quietly made common cause with like-minded Jews: by their very disruption, the militants forged an alliance of the cool-headed. (Last night these moderates met again.)

The second encouragement was the presence of a middle-aged man in a suit, neither a Jew nor a Muslim nor a student. He was Derek Fatchett, a junior minister at the Foreign Office. He did not make a speech or a big entrance; he was not there under duress. He simply dropped by.

For Derek Fatchett has made Jewish-Muslim encounters his business. In doing so, he has redefined not just his job but perhaps the very notion of foreign policy. In a few unheralded actions, Fatchett — whose brief includes the Middle East — is conducting a peace process of his very own. Under his guidance, foreign policy is coming home.

Take last week, when the minister sat down with leaders of Britain's Muslims at the Foreign Office for yet another round of talks, which now take place every six weeks. The likes of Bradford's Sheraz Aslam — a lead player in the Satanic Verses affair — and Ahmed Versi, the editor of the Muslim News, took their usual places in Fatchett's office. They sat, they talked, until the minister suggested a break for prayers. They turned toward Mecca right then and there, under the hush of Canning and Palmerston. Nothing like this happened under the Conservative

government. Fatchett insists with pride, it's his own initiative. "A bit of private enterprise," guided by the belief that foreign policy can no longer be confined to "abroad" — it must take in the diaspora communities that live here in Britain.

So if he meets Netanyahu and Arafat, he'll sit, separately, with British Jews and Muslims. If he deals with Kashmir, he'll meet Indians from Leeds and Pakistanis from Birmingham. He briefs them on the Government's efforts and tells them what he knows, bringing them "into the loop". Muslims are anxious for word on their brethren in Kosovo, Iraq and Palestine, and the soft-spoken Fatchett does his best.

THE aims are clear enough. The minister recognises that Britain is now a multi-racial society, but refuses to accept the conventional wisdom that says race is a matter for the Home Office. He understands that diaspora communities feel a connection to the old country, that, for them, foreign policy is domestic policy. Last week he had a session on Kashmir — with Kashmiris from Pendle.

There's some smart politics here. More than a million and a half Muslims are estimated to live in Britain and, though they may have been one of the no longer automatic Labour voters. Just as American politicians learned long ago to pander to Cubans in Miami and Jews in New York, so Derek Fatchett — who has both Muslim and Jewish communities in his Leeds constituency — has calculated that international policy can bring

domestic votes. But there's idealism, too. The hope is that the diaspora communities might set a lead here which their larger nations will follow. For not only does Fatchett want to improve relations between the Government and these ethnic groups, he wants to see them get on better with each other. The minister hasn't yet brought Jews and Muslims together across a Foreign Office table, but that remains the dream. In the meantime, he's backing a variety of initiatives now underway, from that student encounter to the Al-Haq Foundation — an association of Muslim and Jewish business leaders (whose first meeting was a lunch in the boardroom of Marks and Spencer).

The model is the Middle East peace process, whose groundwork was laid in part by meetings of Jews and Palestinians from Europe and America. Even now, no matter how stalled the talks between Netanyahu and Arafat, the process itself is kept up — partly by the ties knitted by the diaspora outside Israel, and partly by the means of the peace process, says Fatchett, is that contacts have always been "arid, formal and diplomatic". Instead he wants to construct a cat's cradle of "informal, people-to-people connections" between Indians and Pakistanis here.

And Britain might be just the place. Many of the world's warring peoples have communities living here, and our imperial past means London is still a diplomatic hub. It's a hopeful thought: using the Foreign Office not to run the world, but to bring it just a bit closer together.

Tomorrow six MPs have a chance to make our lives much better

Wish-list for the brave

Polly Toynbee



THE ballot for private members bills takes place tomorrow at 12.30. The moment those top six MPs names are drawn, the winners will be mobbed like feudal kings by petitioners of every kind, desperate to have their causes taken up. This odd little sideshow is one of the curious curlicues of parliamentary procedure: it's when the government lets MPs out on retractable dog leads, offering an illusion of unaccustomed freedom, but at the snap of a button the beasts are wound back in again. No bill passes without a government fiat.

Knowing the near-impossibility of getting private members bills on to the statute book, most MPs will take up minor, relatively uncontroversial matters, hoping for general consent. Some unspiced government lap-dogs will obediently take up a dull little bill offered to them by the whips. Though occasionally a brave soul plunges hell-for-leather for a big one — making maximum noise for something close to their heart. Meanwhile a bunch of Tory yahoos — the most notorious being Eric Forth in gold job-watch and chain — will try to vote down every single one, on the ideological libertarian grounds that they are against all legislation and regulation: their only chance to land a blow is on defenceless private members bills: with their single cry of "Object!" harmlessly decent bills fall to this hooligan tendency.

What's around? Off-the-peg bills ready to be thrust into the hands of the lucky six MPs come from all sides: the League Against Cruel Sports will advise against going for fox hunting until the House of Lords is reformed but would urge MPs to try for abolition of deer hunting in the meantime (though why their lordships would be any less sanguinary on this is a mystery). Stonewall is plugging a bill they refer to as SOD, — a Sexual Orientation Discrimination bill — outlawing sackings for being gay. A large group of MPs would go for free TV licences for the poor and housebound. Friends of the Earth and others have a sheaf of bills: forcing all newspapers to print on recycled paper; insulation for every home and a bill to cut traffic by 10 per cent in 10 years. Age Concern want half-price transport for all pensioners. Sane wants rights for all mental illness sufferers for all mental illness sufferers to hospital care. The Consumers Association wants the NHS ombudsman's protection extended to all victims of bad private medical practice.

ABORTION may surface again. The Pro-Choice Alliance, the umbrella lobby of pro-abortion groups, want abortion on request in the first 14 weeks and on the signature of just one doctor up to 24 weeks, with the NHS legally obliged to offer timely abortions for all (a third of women are now forced to pay privately). SFUC — the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child — are ready to retaliate: "We have a very lively group of MPs," says Anne Wildecombe. She says they'll go for tougher grounds for legal abortion and lower time limits. Or they might try for new anti-euthanasia laws to prevent judges from giving permission for withdrawal of feeding from patients in a persistent vegetative state. Most successful private members bills are puny measures offering minor changes. But visionary MPs would be better advised to seize the chance to raise some of those myriad subjects hotly discussed in every pub and wine bar up and down the country — but never mentioned in the House of Commons. What about a republican bill to abolish the monarchy? And another to disestablish the Church of England?

A bill to decriminalise cannabis would at least start a rational debate, and might even get a Royal Commission set up to examine the subject soberly. There were some 65,000 arrests last year for possession. In all, nearly 1,000,000 people in Britain have been arrested for this trivial offence. Yet there has been scant debate in the Commons on the colossal waste of time and money, the needless alienation of swathes of the young for possessing a drug far safer than paracetamol.

Teenage pregnancy is high on the government's agenda. What about a bill to put a clinic with a confidential nurse into every school, available to all the young, offering not just free contraception and morning-after pills, but discreet advice on all emotional, health and family problems, entirely independent of teachers? Boots's first clinic for the young opened this week in Glasgow to a front-page blast from the Daily Mail that this wickedness would encourage underage sex.

Time to get real: large numbers of the young have unprotected, dangerous sex that destroys too many of their lives for want of an easy discreet place to turn. You would guess there must be MPs keenly interested in a privacy bill, and a Press Complaints Commission independent of the newspaper industry. What about a newspaper ownership limitation bill as well? Every other Western nation has laws to limit the amount of media any one company or person can own: time we had an effective one too, and forced Murdoch to divest



A bill to decriminalise cannabis would at least start a rational and open debate

himself of half his mushrooming empire.

Most laws are about limiting damage and putting right wrongs. Now we need some bills for the promotion of pure pleasure. Start with more public holidays: there are none in the long stretch from August to Christmas, none from Christmas to Easter, fewer than anywhere in Europe. It's time too for a declaration of intent to move towards a four-day week, instead of longer and longer working hours, part of a national leisure plan. With the money we could save by cancelling the Eurofighter — \$14 billion — we could build a pleasure dome in every district, offering art, sport, music, dancing and enticing classes to encourage every kind of leisure in an atmosphere far from the environs of colleges too many people find forbidding.

No, of course none of this is going to happen, or not now, not quite yet. But private members bills should be used to lift the eyes of governments and politicians above the mundane, to test the water with ideas that may sound less far fetched once spoken aloud and debated in the chamber. It is the one chance MPs get to seek the chains of official party policy and express their individual visions. Speak up now, whoever you lucky six may be. Give us something brave.

Russians, Turks, Jews, Maltese, Jamaicans... immigrants still take the blame for much of our crime

Damned foreigners

Duncan Campbell

ONE of Scotland Yard's most colourful detectives operating in the early part of the century was Fred "Nutty" Sharpe. When he wrote his memoirs in 1939 he recalled the "flocks of aliens" arriving at the turn of the century in London: "Russians in top-boots and leather leggings and little round fur hats, wild-looking people from the most outlandish parts of that great uncivilised land, a lot were desperadoes and went in for crime straightaway."

This week, a headline in the Daily Mail on the Brutal Crimes of the Asylum Seekers follows a recent series in the Evening Standard on the same theme. The British Transport Police have also this week warned about gangs of Bosnian pickpockets on the London underground. Earlier this year, Turks in London were said by police to

be responsible for 80 per cent of UK heroin traffic. It would seem as though Nutty's warnings about the dangers of aliens had gone unheeded. And there is a long history of Britain perceiving herself to be in the grip of foreign criminals.

At the turn of the century, it was the Russians. By the end of the first world war, a new villain had emerged: the Chinese opium seller, who as World Pictorial News reported, preyed on white women who did not have "sufficient decency and pride of race" to turn down the men with "lips thin and cruel, tightly drawn across even yellow teeth".

By 1929, an expose of criminality in London, Crooks Of The Underworld, referred to managers of night clubs who "being of Jewish persuasion" advised how to carry out insurance frauds: "Jewish lightning was the slang term for arson."

They have since passed, first to the Pakistanis and now the Turks. In the meantime, the Jamaicans, the Colombians and the Nigerians had arrived as exporters by appointment to the underworld and the Russians (this time minus the leggings and the little round fur hats) had emerged again.

So does this tell us that we lived in a Garden of Eden here until the foreign serpent arrived and started scrumping our apples? Of course, many of the immigrant groups mentioned above had their hands of desperadoes. One of the reasons for this was that any new group of immigrants, be they asylum seekers or refugees, are likely to find themselves excluded from the mainstream.

One way round this exclusion, as the Italians discovered so spectacularly in the United States, was the illegal way. A different lan-

guage and a natural immigrant solidarity meant that they could operate for long enough to avoid detection, invest and move into legitimate business. What received less notice was that the vast majority of the immigrants quietly got on with life as waiters, cleaners, nurses, bus-drivers and, now, minicab drivers.

Some asylum-seekers have been involved in horrible crimes and it is right that they should be arrested and punished for them, but they represent a tiny number of the people arriving here over the past few months.

Much has changed in Britain since Nutty saw the Rusksies arriving at Irongate Wharf on the Thames but some things have remained fairly constant. Our murderers and rapists, our paedophiles and fraudsters, our wife-beaters and road-ragers still remain, almost universally, of good, solid Anglo-Saxon stock.

It would seem that Nutty's warning about the aliens went unheeded

who become friendly with West Indians... enticed to hemp smoking... The potential moral danger is significant since a principal motive of the coloured man in smoking hemp is to stimulate his sexual desire".

By the 60s, the Chinese were back on the map of villainy again, associated with the growth of the illegal heroin market, a role

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Missed tricks in Europe

Labour must show warmth

IN THEIR European dealings British ministers seem unable to avoid sub-Churchillian bluster. Gordon Brown included. It's as if a quick look at the Lady's Bruges speech were still the best briefing for a Brussels visit. We will fight them on the (fiscal) beaches, we will protect forever the sovereignty of Parliament — even though we think it a feudal anachronism in dire need of reconstruction. Before he went to Ecoin, the regular meeting of finance ministers, Gordon Brown yesterday seemed far less sure than when he defends his domestic economic policies. Perhaps a jaunty Saarlander has seen to that.

Oskar Lafontaine is the wild child of European politics who has given a filip to the Eurosceptic press. But it's not Lafontaine who is the problem, or even the proposals for tax harmonisation (to which the British contribution yesterday was support for postponing the abolition of duty-free sales within the EU). So much for freer trade. But that speaks to the ambiguities of Blairite Euro policy. Lately spin control doesn't seem to have been working. There's inattentiveness in the failure to anticipate Bonn's new noises and the public exposition of fiscal thinking in the Commission.

Blairite engagement with Europe began with those *de haut en bas* lectures on the superiority of the Anglo-liberal (third) way followed, this spring, by signs of detailed but humbler involvement. The advent of Gerhard Schröder — a victory which has taken less than two months to dim — led to talk of

social democratic alliances and new impetus to cooperation. Meanwhile the European Union's "domestic" agenda — budgetary reforms, accession of the former east block — has offered all sorts of opportunities for intellectual and policy leadership not at all dependent on British participation in the common currency. Anxiety within the Franco-German relationship (part ideological, part strategic, part plain old national interest) has given Britain the chance to display clever footwork on and off the ball.

It's not happening. And meanwhile the great work of cajoling, influencing, educating the British public in its best long-run interests has been neglected. The half-truths and exaggerations of Euroscepticism worst excesses have gone unchallenged, presumably for the sake of higher alliances between Prime Minister and media magnates. Instead of robust counter-arguments (pointing out that rhetorical excess is an old Euro feature and Lafontaine's plans have yet to pass the Bundestag let alone enter serious Euro-negotiations) Europe becomes an embarrassment. Never celebration. And so, this week, the Government pays the price. There are various responses to Oskar Lafontaine, one of which is laughter. We also need to distinguish clearly, as do Mario Monti and Commissioner de Silguy, between fiscal reform as part of the single market project and tax harmonisation as some inevitable consequence of the euro. Tax harmonisation is not the same as uniformity in tax rates, either. The constant British assumption that it's us and a solid phalanx of them is a bad basis for diplomacy. It is not just the Spanish who find labour market reform an attractive option. Clever repartee directed at Herr Lafontaine might welcome his conversion to the cause of (income) tax cutting. It's partly a matter of tone. Some day, on their own timetable, Chancellor, Prime Minister

and colleagues will be leading a campaign to convince British people to vote yes in a referendum on joining the single currency. Hostility towards Europe is not to be underestimated (as this week's British Social Attitudes survey reminds us). And there are still very serious worries about the economic effects of the euro. But objections are not going to ease of their own accord. More warmth and projection now would be a good way of putting in match practice.

Downsizing poets

Oxford's ode to Philistinism

"Poetry, which is in Oxford made/ An art, in London is only a trade". What may have been fact in Dryden's day is, sadly, true no more. Trade has taken over the dreaming spirit and poetry has joined the lost causes, passed its sell-by-date. The decision of the Oxford University Press to close its poetry list — a move endorsed by a committee of dons — has sullied the image of the whole university. A week after the decision it has become a public relations disaster out of all proportion to the paltry sums involved. The OUP is coy about figures but it is believed that the turnover of the list was between £28,000 and £50,000.

This compares with last night's Turner prize of £20,000 and estimates of up to £6 million for the profit that the OUP as a whole makes for the university. The list wasn't even losing money. According to the OUP it was "barely covering its costs". Oh dear. Goodness knows what would have happened to the early Shakespeare or the emerging Marlowe if the OUP had found they too weren't making "a reasonable dividend to go back to the original owners, the university". There's no such thing, it

seems, as free verse, everything must contribute to the university's purse.

It has been argued that closure doesn't matter because of the list's low turnover. Who, after all, would miss a few poets? But lowish sales were a reflection of the OUP's lack of commitment as much as anything (though not that of its respected part-time poetry editor, Jacqueline Simms). Many of the OUP's poets — names like Fleur Adcock, D J Enright, Jo Shapcott and Peter Porter — may have little difficulty finding another publisher but that's not the point. As Ms Shapcott noted, if Manchester United were to close down, its players would find other jobs — but there would be one less place for budding recruits to make their way.

Poetry's status as the new rock 'n' roll may have been exaggerated. Poetry books rarely become best sellers apart from a Heaney, or a Hughes or the admirable Poems on the Underground. But people are reading, writing or listening to poems — whether in their newspapers, pubs, festivals or on the radio — in increasing numbers. Poetry is a creative art that needs constant stimulation. If Oxford can only see it as something that McKinseys need to do market testing on, rather than part of the idea of a university, then something will have gone that may never come back. A thing of beauty is a joy forever, even when there is a little red ink on the bottom line.

Quebec's enigma

Voters vote for a new vote

CEST magnifique, mais ce n'est pas l'indépendance. Lucien Bouchard's Parti Québécois did itself proud in the last weeks of the province's election campaign by upsetting strong poll showings for the opposition and

squeaking home to victory. Though the PQ's margin is slightly down, it commands a healthy enough majority of seats for a full term. Victory came from its leader's energetic campaign as well as his opponent's blunders in threatening to cut welfare benefits and the state payroll on which many Québécois still rely.

The PQ has been many things in the last 30 years. From the social-democratic leanings of its charismatic first leader, René Lévesque, to the centre-right philosophy of Lucien Bouchard, it has travelled a zig-zag path. But the constant factor has been its determination to preserve the French language and Quebec's separate culture in an increasingly Americanised world. Quebec is closer to the belly of the beast, as M Bouchard with his American wife well knows. As in Scotland, the Basque country, or Bavaria, the desire for regional sovereignty and local control as a reaction to homogenisation and distant decision-making is neither reactionary nor necessarily destructive.

In his softly-softly approach M Bouchard, who advocates "sovereignty-partnership", was helped recently by Canada's Supreme Court. Although its verdict was that Quebec could not secede unilaterally, it ruled that the federal government must negotiate in good faith if a clear majority in Quebec voted for independence in a referendum. This destroyed the Federalists' case that a Yes vote would bring chaos.

M Bouchard's re-election now gives him the platform to advance to another referendum at the best moment of his choosing. But he has no guarantee even then of a majority. In total votes the PQ lost to the Liberals yesterday, who oppose independence. Many who voted for the PQ like its good government, but not its aspirations to sovereignty. Le jeu n'est pas fini.

Letters to the Editor

Some minor disputes

JULIE Flint accuses me (Turkish delight, December 1) of "misreading" my article on the extradition of the PKK leader, Ocaklan (The other side, November 28). She does not cite any, and so I have no case to answer. Miss Flint, however, does. If the grievances of Kurds in central and western Turkey are as bad as she claims, why do these millions not vote for HADEP, the party identified with these grievances? I do not write this in any anti-Kurdish spirit, quite the contrary. I would just like to know the answer.

Norman Stone.

[SOPPOSE I should be glad if that my elderly motor car is able to run on unleaded petrol instead of the soon-to-be-banned 4-star for which its engine was designed. (Warning over old engines' fuel, November 29). Unfortunately, without a catalytic converter, my vehicle will belch highly carcinogenic benzene (used in unleaded petrol to substitute for lead) into the atmosphere whenever I use it. The problem of benzene release is not limited to older vehicles run on unleaded fuel — catalytic converters, designed for conditions in California, are not very effective at removing benzene in climates like that of UK. It seems strange to try to reduce the likelihood of brain damage in children by increasing the risk of cancer to the general population.

Neil Hearne.

[SINCERELY hope that Joy Shapcott's collection does win the T S Eliot prize, as Dan Glesler hints (Proseic business of putting prize on poetry, December 1). It will finally prove her superiority over that arch rival Jo Shapcott.

Ted Slade.

On the spot in Santiago

NOW that the Lords have established that, henceforth torture can under no circumstances form part of the functions of any government, the immediate issue about General Pinochet is not what would satisfy men and women on the British left (The general gets his orders, December 1). It is what would be best for a still endangered democracy in Chile.

The regretful but considered view among leaders of the Chilean left, including survivors who were in office in 1970-73 is that the return of an inevitably discredited and humiliated Pinochet would do the least harm to the chances of democratic progress in their country. This is also the view expressed to me by a very authoritative democratic figure in neighbouring Argentina. May I add that I have just returned from Santiago where, sitting beside President Allende's widow, I had

the luck to see with what joy the televised judgment of the Law Lords was received.

Eric Hobsbawm.

[AM a survivor of Pol Pot's regime. Earlier this year, there was a glimpse of a hope that he would be brought to trial in either a US or a Canadian court. And it was no other than the US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright who spearheaded the effort to extradite him from Cambodia. Ironically that she is now putting her government's weight behind those opposing a similar extradition.

There are other key perpetrators of the Cambodian genocide who have not yet been brought to justice. Ieng Sary, for example, who was Pol Pot's co-ordinator in crime for nearly three decades, was given an amnesty a couple of years ago on grounds of "national reconciliation".

I know only too well the profound dismay and powerlessness which an opportunity such as this is allowed to pass.

Martha Pearce.

[LOST virtually my whole family in the Holocaust. For me, the critical issue — one purely of justice — is whether, had Adolf Hitler survived the war, he could have been prosecuted for the slaughter of millions of defenceless people.

Surely no one would have argued at the time that such a prosecution would have been illegal because Hitler had been head of state when those atrocities were committed, and it is unthinkable that such an argument should prevail in Pinochet's case.

The precedent set by a decision not to extradite him would, in effect, legalise genocide.

Leslie Baruch Brent.



Tell that to the fundamentalists

SOPHISTER Tatchell reckons he is to the gay movement what Martin Luther King was to black civil rights. (Tatchell invokes Gandhi in court, December 1). Telephone calls to newspapers to "out" people and a short sprint up a church pulpit (where coincidentally there were some television cameras) are hardly in the Gandhi or suffragettes' mould. Martyrs are people like St Paul, Joan of Arc or Bobby Sands. People who really believed in their cause and who

Lessons for Africa from my wife's senseless death

YOU have highlighted the discrepancy between the West and the developing world in survival rates for people with Aids (Aids "ripping out economic gains", November 25). Well, I am HIV positive and picked up my infection in Botswana from my wife, who tragically was in the wrong place at the wrong time to benefit from the new drugs. However, as a British citizen at least I have the chance to stay healthy. My wife was very highly qualified, someone her country could not afford to lose. It hurts to think that if she had been a British citizen and living in the UK she would still be alive today.

Botswana, which tops the world HIV statistics with over 20 per cent of the population infected, and possibly over 40 per cent in the 20 to 45 age group, is not a typical poor African country. It may top this unfortunate table but it is also the one country in Africa that could afford to treat its

infected population, and yet has not chosen to do so. It has several billion US dollars in reserve which it is saving for the proverbial rainy day. Surely that rainy day has arrived, and may become an international pressure has to be put on Botswana.

The country can be the shining beacon of Africa, if it can just see that its people's good health is as important as its other priorities, such as spending on arms. It must start to make a plan with WHO and the drug companies to make its people better, more hopeful and therefore more productive.

Name and address supplied.

We do not publish letters where only an e-mail address is supplied; please include a full postal address. We may edit letters; shorter ones are more likely to appear. We regret we cannot acknowledge those not used. Please provide a reference to the relevant article.

A touch of class for Britain's new social order

CERTAINLY, Polly Toynbee's question: "Can you have an ideology of freedom and equality when everywhere we are sucked back into an image of servitude?" is of relevance to Britain in the nineties (We're all middle class now, November 30). However, a concept of the middle class so broad as to embrace both senior executives and clerical workers tells us nothing about real socio-economic trends; it merely alienates non-manual workers from their manual counterparts.

There is an alternative: Marx saw class in terms of the relationship of the worker to the ownership of production. This brings into sharper focus the major socio-economic

trend of the eighties and nineties: the transfer of wealth from the majority who have to earn a wage to the tiny élite who own the means of production. For Marx, ideology was "false consciousness": freedom and equality leading to classlessness under capitalism is ideology indeed.

Mike Diboll.

THE Economist's World in Figures puts 71 per cent of the UK's GDP, and 78 per cent of its employment, in "services". So why does the new social order (Teachers get more class in social shake-up, December 1) find no place for consultants in management, marketing, media, financial services, design, advertising,

This sounds like a rip-off

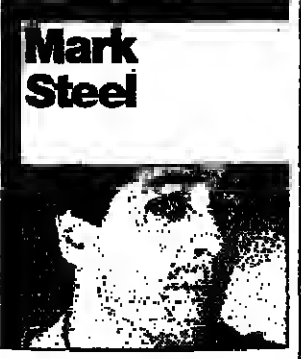
WE ARE a small independent record label. CDs leave us for our distributors at £14.99. This includes a £4.99 (33 per cent) mark up, and £2.24 in VAT. Our complaints that this was far too big a profit margin, especially since all stocks were taken by Farringdon's at no risk on a sale-or-return basis, were ignored. The record company and the artists are blamed for high CD prices because their name is on it. Any OFT investigation should look at the other end of the supply chain.

Ian Anderson.

the band's CDs from our distributor at £7.85 and sold them at £14.99. This includes a £4.99 (33 per cent) mark up, and £2.24 in VAT. Our complaints that this was far too big a profit margin, especially since all stocks were taken by Farringdon's at no risk on a sale-or-return basis, were ignored. The record company and the artists are blamed for high CD prices because their name is on it. Any OFT investigation should look at the other end of the supply chain.

Ian Anderson.

Straw man



SO THERE'S another argument for not taking out private health insurance. You could go in to have your tonsils out, wake up afterwards and find yourself lying next to a military dictator.

Apparently he was a fussy patient who, according to staff, "enjoyed a good moult". How did the nurses deal with that? "Oh dear, we are a grumpy old torturer today, aren't we? Well get this soup

down you and we'll have you back at those cattle prods in no time".

Now the hospital has kicked him out. So maybe the consultants will start to disappear, and the Conservative Party will say that you couldn't blame him for murdering the chief surgeon, as the hospital's accounts were in a terrible state.

That would be no more ludicrous than Norman Lamont on Newsnight, saying that it was time the matter was "laid to rest". His argument was that, whatever happened, to continue making over bygone events with legal wrangling makes matters worse. Which must mean he supports the abolition of all laws. All these years and he's never let on that he's a militant anarchist. Perhaps that's why he threw ten billion quid away on Black Monday. It was a plot to rid the country of money, which binds the common person to material possessions and stops us thinking

for ourselves. The argument of Pinochet's lawyers has been even more stimulating. If the extradition goes through, they ask, does that mean next time P W Botha or Baby Doc Duvalier goes abroad, that they should be arrested as well? What a splendid ideal it goes to show, just because you're a right-wing thug doesn't mean you can't have the odd spark of inspiration.

The case for trying him in Chile was explained by a "senior source", quoted in "The Observer". Chileans would "make a point of giving him a proper trial", he said, so that they could "prove themselves" before the world. Pinochet supporters, as we know, are extremely sensitive to public relations. They're just easily misinformed. It seems that, in Chilean custom, it's a mark of great respect to attack a BBC camera crew.

Also, if the Chilean government really wanted to put Pinochet on trial, why have they never managed it before?

Too busy, I suppose. Jose Miguel Insuza, the Chilean minister battling for this settlement, must be saying to Jack Straw: "Honestly, we meant to get round to it but it's been like a madhouse in Chile, it really has."

So if he does stand trial in his home country, he's not likely to face that rigorous a grilling. "General, where were you on the night of the coup?" "I was out."

"Well that wraps it up for me."

The idea that Chileans are the best people to try someone for crimes against Chileans is odd, as it assumes that all Chileans have a common interest. Surely it depends on which Chileans are to do the trying. A clue as to which section of Chilean society would try Pinochet in his own country, comes from the following observation. In general, poor Chileans are demanding his extradition to Spain, while rich Chileans were preparing to celebrate

his return to Chile with champagne. Another clue is that one influential group amongst rich Chileans demanding his return, is called "The Pinochet Foundation".

SINCE the law lords' decision, the case for extraditing Pinochet has become more painfully overwhelming than before. And yet an article in this paper made perfect sense when it began "Jack Straw is beginning the most uncomfortable two weeks of his political life". How can that be? For millions of people from his generation, if they had the power to determine whether Pinochet went home or on trial, it would be the most comfortable two minutes of any part of their life.

Following the coup, if straw had been told that one day a decision on the dictator's extradition would be down to him, he'd have leaped with joy. But 20 years of being realistic leaves him finding the de-

cision the most uncomfortable of his life. It's like sinking into depression because you've won the Lottery, and can't decide whether or not to collect the money. And then saying to Camellot "As it's such a tough one, could I have an extra week to decide?"

Pinochet's lucky that he only overthrew a government and murdered his opponents. If Straw had caught him skinning up a spiff, he'd have been in Bow Street Court the same afternoon.

Straw seems desperate to find a compromise, which could be presented as not letting the General off, but not agreeing to everything demanded by the Spanish judge. So here's a suggestion. Pinochet should be extradited to Spain, but on the condition that he's kept in the filthiest, most rat-infested cell in the land, which he shares with a 7ft Basque ex-wrestler who greets him with "Buenos dias, señor. I say, I do like a military man with a moustache."



At 16, Mary ran away from a life of abuse. Today she is homeless. Could you sleep easy on Christmas Eve knowing she was shivering in a bus shelter?

You can help keep Mary, and thousands of vulnerable people like her, safe and warm over Christmas. With £25 from you, Crisis can provide a warm bed, hot meals, clean clothes and someone to talk to at one of our shelters.

As the days count down to Christmas, nearly 10,000 homeless people are counting on Crisis. We're counting on you. Our service depends on public donations. So please send your £25 today — in time to help us buy the bedding, food and clothes we need to bring Mary in from the cold.

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Yes, I'll keep homeless people warm:

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I enclose a cheque made payable to Crisis. OR debit my:

☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Switch* other

Card no. /

* Last three digits of Switch card no. / / / Switch issue no. / /

Expiry date / / Signature

* Gifts of £250 or more are worth almost a third extra to us under Gift Aid

Name (caps) Mr/Ms/Ms

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Postcode

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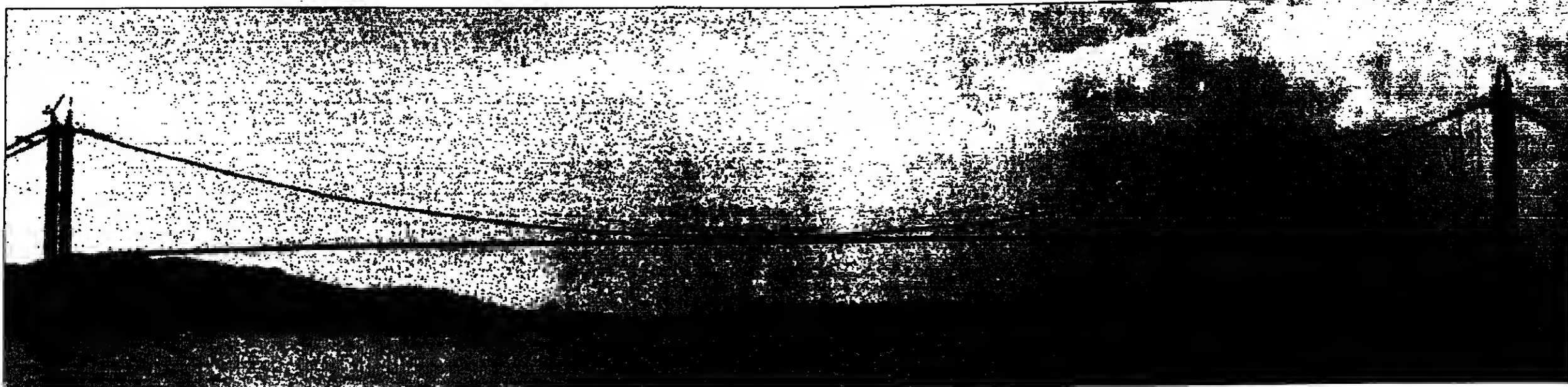
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Analysis Turkey



Toynbee calls for stately pleasure domes
8



Bridge over troubled waters

The Bosphorus crossing links Europe and Asia, yet despite their geopolitical importance and long membership of Nato, the Turks batter in vain on Europe's door.

Stephen Bates and Martin Walker ask whether they deserve ostracism from the Brussels club.

IT'S ironic that Vienna of all places should be where next week Europe's heads of government meet to discuss their worsening relations with Turkey. Ever since the Turks first laid siege to the city in 1529 there has been a legacy of misunderstanding, mistrust and mutual incomprehension between them and western Europeans. The choice of Vienna is accidental, to do with Austria's presidency of the European Union but it's apposite: this has been one of the most difficult years for the European-Turkish relationship (a figure of speech which history makes deeply problematical — does Asia really begin over the Bosphorus?).

Following the Turkish government's exasperated decision to end its attempt to join the EU earlier this year after constant rejections, a trade war is

now threatened over Italy's refusal to extradite the Kurdish guerrilla leader Abdullah Öcalan. Jacques Santer, president of the European Commission, said last week that the EU would stand solid with Italy if Ankara imposed sanctions. Brussels emphasised that not all EU member states necessarily regard Öcalan as a terrorist though his PKK organisation has killed thousands of civilians during a violent 20-year campaign. The Europeans cannot understand why Turkey should so misconstrue their reluctance to hand over Öcalan without due process of law to a regime which would so like to hang him high (although the death penalty has not been used in Turkey since 1984). And for their part Turks cannot understand why the EU should spurn them in this matter as in their bid to join the European club.

'Twas ever thus. In the dictionary of quotations from Shakespeare to Mozart, Dickens to Gladstone and Lloyd George, the Turks get insulting citations. From Lawrence of Arabia, allegedly raped in the desert, to the movie *Midnight Express* and the fugitive financier Aziz Nizic, a contemptuous image has built up around a nation whose people are otherwise acknowledged to be both cultivated and friendly, living in a country with a long and civilised past and an economically dynamic and western-orientated present.

Consult any of the taxi drivers of many of Europe's cities (those who are not themselves Turkish that is) and you will be regaled with hostility to immigrants, all lumped together as 'shish kebabs'. Turkey has been waiting to join the European Union now for nearly 40

years and, for all many Europeans care, could wait another 40. It joined the queue in 1959, way before Britain, but, following a decision at the Luxembourg summit this time last year, it has been placed effectively last. It looks as if it will not get in until after Romania and Bulgaria — countries with much less secure economic and political bases — well into the next millennium.

This is despite Turkey's important strategic position, now no less than in the cold war, controlling water supply to neighbours such as Syria and potentially commanding the likely pipeline routes for the world's next great untapped oil fields in Azerbaijan. Turkey's problem was that its latest bid to join the EU follows the end of the Cold War. As President Süleyman Demirel remarked bitterly: "When the defence of European civilisation [against communism] was at stake, they didn't say we were Turks and Muslims."

The EC concedes the country is well on the way to qualifying for admission on economic grounds: "Turkey has all the hallmarks of a market economy possessing a well-developed institutional and legislative framework, a dynamic private sector and liberal trade rules. The economy has considerable potential for growth and has shown great adaptability which has contributed significantly to its modernisation" (1).

Although per capita GDP is only a third of the EU average and inflation was nearing 70 per cent last year, Turkey is growing fast: exports have risen by more than 20 per cent since 1995 and half now go to Europe. Agriculture's share of GNP, a key transitional indicator, is down to 14 per cent.

This is despite a loss of trade averaging \$7 billion a year since the Gulf war: cutting off the Iraqi oil pipeline alone has cost Turkey \$27 billion since 1991 and a third of its 300,000-strong lorry fleet has had to find alternative work. As a senior EU diplomat remarks, "Turkey has proved a reliable ally internationally. It has adhered to United Nations sanctions despite the cost. It is the world's only real Muslim democracy. It has a large and stable middle class. It is a consumer society. It would be a glittering prize for the EU."

Turkey's participation in Nato — it has the second largest army in the alliance — and its pivotal location at the crossroads of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, explains the long indulgence the country enjoyed throughout the cold war. America's subsequent devotion is based on Turkey's

pivotal position in the Middle East, perfectly placed to dominate the eastern Mediterranean and Central Asia. It can launch air strikes and patrols against Iraq, and provide pipeline routes for oil from the Caspian basin that will not have to use the Russian pipeline monopoly. The discreet military co-operation between Turkey and Israel, with joint exercises and freedom to train in Turkish airspace is a second bonus for Washington.

HERE'S a further factor and it's one that Richard Feiler, former assistant secretary at the Pentagon, suggests may be the most important of all at a time of American worries about Islamic fundamentalism. "Turkey is a country where most people subscribe to the Islamic faith, but it is a secular state, allied and strategically oriented to the West, with elected civilian governments, democratic procedures, an independent judiciary, free markets and a free press."

"This makes Turkey virtually unique in the Islamic world, and offers an important alternative model of democracy to the growing numbers of Arabs who suspect that their countries do not have to be run in the way they have been" (2).

Turkey's long wait was not eased when last year Helmut Kohl, the German chancellor, chose a meeting of Christian Democrat leaders in Brussels to announce firmly that as far as he was concerned Turkey could never join the EU. "Turkish membership of the EU is not possible" (3). What he was

really worried about was immigration. There are an estimated 2 million Turks living in the EU (out of its population of 11 million Muslims), compared with only 180,000 who have made their homes in the Arab world. One worker in four in the German car industry is Turkish. They have not been made welcome, although there are signs that the new German government is more prepared to look at offering citizenship to some of its Turkish residents. But they have not been a particular burden on social security systems, as recent Belgian figures show.

Only last week Austria's foreign minister Wolfgang Schüssel was telling the European Parliament that no promise could be made — yet as a recent book notes, Turkish workers are "apparently thought good enough to clean the floors in the Commission buildings in Brussels".

Greece too remains implacably opposed to Turkish EU membership, to such an extent that it may block all enlargement if there is an accommodation with the Turks over Cyprus. It has already done its best to stymie EU aid to its old rival, in contravention of the customs agreement signed three years ago. Turkish occupation of northern Cyprus has given Greece an incentive to oppose Turkish accession; the prospect of (Greek) southern Cyprus joining gives the EU its most knotty single problem.

The Americans and their Nato allies in northern Europe used to be confident that Greek-Turkish strains could be kept under control. In 1980, when the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty formally ended the cold war, the numbers of

tanks and guns on Nato's central front had to be slashed by 40 per cent. Nato shipped almost the lot to Greece and Turkey, just as the Balkan wars to their north got under way on the grounds that this would be cheaper than scrapping them. That weapons to be scrapped to seal the peace in central Europe were being shipped to the fringes of a real war zone in the Balkans was an irony lost on the Nato planners.

THE articulation of Turkish interests isn't helped by endemic political instability. Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz lost office last week. With a track record of three coups in the 20 years before 1980 and a strong presence in politics since, the country's armed forces stand ready to intervene again. Only this week the general staff warned politicians to take care. Non-religious parties are strong but unable to coalesce, leaving a gap for Muslim fundamentalism. Observers see recent support for Islamic parties as more of a protest than evidence of religious conversion, a strike against the personal liberties and instability which brought down the coalition government. None of this helps Turkey in presenting a coherent line to the outside world.

The country for all its desire for European acceptance, has been slow to acknowledge, or appreciate genuine concerns, particularly over human and social rights. Its underpaid, corrupt, unaccountable and sometimes brutal police force has, according to EU sources, proved much more effective than Turkey's suave diplomatic service and millions spent on public

relations in promoting a certain picture of the country abroad.

It is Turkey's human rights record that gives the EU every opportunity to block membership. The recent EC report was scathing: "The actual upholding of civil and political rights enshrined in the Turkish constitution and law remains problematic. Cases of torture, disappearances and extrajudicial executions are recorded regularly. Freedom of expression is not fully assured and is subject to numerous restrictions... many of the cases put into question the effective control and supervision of the security forces."

It is the reverse side of the great westernisation process inaugurated by Kemal Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey in the 1920s. He may have pledged the state to a secular, western future, but he also left a legacy of intolerance of dissent and authoritarianism. Although civilian politicians say they are committed to improving human rights (and headlines in last week's Turkish press over the Öcalan row were promising: "Don't worry, we won't hang him"), the legacy of distrust remains. It won't go away in Vienna.

Sources: (1) European Commission, Regular Report on Turkey's progress towards accession, November 1996; (2) Institute of Strategic Studies conference, Toronto, May 1998; (3) Minutes of European People's Party meeting, Val Duchesse, Brussels, March 4, 1997; see also Nicole and Hugh Pope, *Turkey Unveiled*, Murray 1997 and James Pettifer, *The Turkish Labyrinth*, Penguin 1997.

Stephen Bates is the Guardian's Europe editor and Martin Walker is Europe editor.

Atatürk and after

1914 Ottoman empire allied with Axis Powers enters First World War. Conflict in Palestine, Arabia, and Gallipoli. October, 1918 Defeated, signs Mudros Armistice. November, 1918 Anatolia occupied by Allies. Dismemberment of empire. 1919-1922 Post war occupation and war of independence. Emergence of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founder of modern Turkey. National Assembly. July 1923 Lausanne Peace gives new Turkish State independence. October, 1923 completion of Turkish Republic. 1923-30 Kemal presidency. 1923 Constitution adopted.

1934 Kemal receives honorary title Atatürk, father of the Turks. 1938 Atatürk dies. 1938-46 Turkey neutral during second world war. 1945-46 Turkey joins UN. 1946-48 Turkey joins NATO. 1948-49 Turkey gives economic aid, Turkey becomes military ally of US. 1950-54 Turkey joins NATO. 1954-56 Turkey joins NATO. 1956-58 Turkey joins NATO. 1958-60 Turkey joins NATO. 1960-62 Turkey joins NATO. 1962-64 Turkey joins NATO. 1964-66 Turkey joins NATO. 1966-68 Turkey joins NATO. 1968-70 Turkey joins NATO. 1970-72 Turkey joins NATO. 1972-74 Turkey joins NATO. 1974-76 Turkey joins NATO. 1976-78 Turkey joins NATO. 1978-80 Turkey joins NATO. 1980-82 Turkey joins NATO. 1982-84 Turkey joins NATO. 1984-86 Turkey joins NATO. 1986-88 Turkey joins NATO. 1988-90 Turkey joins NATO. 1990-92 Turkey joins NATO. 1992-94 Turkey joins NATO. 1994-96 Turkey joins NATO. 1996-98 Turkey joins NATO. 1998-2000 Turkey joins NATO.

Eyvan becomes president. 1992 Eyvan is restored. Eyvan continues as president. 1994 Eyvan is restored. Eyvan continues as president. 1996 Eyvan is restored. Eyvan continues as president. 1998 Eyvan is restored. Eyvan continues as president. 2000 Eyvan is restored. Eyvan continues as president. 2002 Eyvan is restored. Eyvan continues as president. 2004 Eyvan is restored. Eyvan continues as president. 2006 Eyvan is restored. Eyvan continues as president. 2008 Eyvan is restored. Eyvan continues as president. 2010 Eyvan is restored. Eyvan continues as president. 2012 Eyvan is restored. Eyvan continues as president. 2014 Eyvan is restored. Eyvan continues as president. 2016 Eyvan is restored. Eyvan continues as president. 2018 Eyvan is restored. Eyvan continues as president. 2020 Eyvan is restored. Eyvan continues as president. 2022 Eyvan is restored. Eyvan continues as president. 2024 Eyvan is restored. Eyvan continues as president. 2026 Eyvan is restored. Eyvan continues as president. 2028 Eyvan is restored. Eyvan continues as president. 2030 Eyvan is restored. Eyvan continues as president.

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Jobs lost after empty takeover promises

Courtaulds to sack 1,200

Julia Finch

COURTAULDS Textiles, a leading supplier to Marks & Spencer, is to axe more than 1,200 jobs at its Claremont Garments subsidiary just two months after it bought the firm and promised workers the takeover would strengthen the business. Eight Claremont factories, from Portsmouth to Tyneside, are to be closed down with the loss of 1,125 jobs, and a further 95 head office redundancies are planned. The cuts mean that one in four of Claremont's workforce are to lose their jobs.

Courtaulds Textiles chief executive Colin Dyer said the redundancies would generate "increased flexibility and cost effectiveness" and were "essential to ensure that we remain competitive in the

international, fast-moving clothing business". But a spokesman for the GMB general union said it was appalled at the shut-downs. National Officer Des Farrell accused Courtaulds of "textiles of asset-stripping and demanded a Government inquiry". Courtaulds bought Claremont, which is also a major supplier to Marks & Spencer, for £10 million in September. Until 1996 it had been regarded as a star performer, but a series of acquisitions left it nursing losses. In June the company announced it would focus entirely on supplying Marks & Spencer and the firm's links with the retailer were one of its big attractions to Courtaulds. The sites now scheduled for closure include six lingerie factories in Gillingham, Sandiacre, Nottingham, Hampshire, Portsmouth,



Redundancy notice... Claremont Garments in South Shields is one of eight Courtauld Textiles' plants to go to the wall

'Companies are shifting production to cheap labour countries'

Hampshire, Shoreham-by-Sea, Sussex, Woodville in Derbyshire and Newton Aycliffe in Durham. In addition a casual wear factory in South Shields and a formal wear fac-

tory in Stanley, Durham, will also be closed. More than 570 of the job losses will be concentrated in the North-East. The Claremont job losses come as the UK textiles industry is facing increased demands from retailers to cut their costs or lose business. Marks & Spencer, which has always boasted about the large proportion of its clothing sourced in the UK, is among those retailers demanding better prices, even if that means moving production abroad. Last month the retailer announced a 23 per cent profit slump and pledged to improve its selling prices. Many UK companies, including Courtaulds Textiles, are shifting production to cheap labour countries such as Mexico and Morocco, although the company yesterday stressed that it was "committed to maintaining a well-invested, profitable manufacturing base in the UK". Details of the Claremont job losses came just a week after rival Dewhirst Clothing confirmed it was axing 600

jobs by closing factories in Cleveland and Stoke-on-Trent. Other textile companies have issued a series of profit warnings and the British Clothing Industry Association has called the current situation facing the textile industry as the worst in living memory. The Transport and General Workers' Union says there have been 25,000 job losses in the industry this year. The Bank of England last night defended its policy of setting interest rates to combat inflation rather than promote growth and employment. Deputy governor Mervyn King said: "Monetary policy cannot influence levels of employment in the long run." He rejected calls by the German finance minister Oskar Lafontaine for European monetary policy to promote growth and employment.

Notebook

Symptoms add up to poor prognosis



Alex Brummer

THE rosy scenario that has propped up western financial markets since the turmoil sparked by the Russian devaluation and debt default is fading quickly. The falls seen on the European markets in yesterday's trading — a 4.8 per cent drop in the Dax in Germany and a 3.5 per cent drop in the FTSE — are substantial and reflect deep-seated concerns about global economic events. Why, then, is there a sudden return to gloom on the financial markets? It is the realisation that the global economy is slowing quite speedily. One of the symptoms of this slowdown is the sudden rash of mergers as some of the fatter multinationals shed costs and jobs. The survey data is also less than encouraging in the UK, while the Chancellor is away battling against tax harmonisation, the surveys have taken a nasty turn. It is the surveys these days that count — they are more forward-looking than official data and often more reliable. The UK Purchasing Managers Index has registered its lowest reading in its seven-year history, with orders still tumbling. But it is not just manufacturing that is in the doldrums. The new quarterly services sector survey produced by the CBI and Deloitte, predicts falls in consumer, business and professional services as the cost pressures on the corporate sector start to bite. What was really scaring the markets in late trading was the US National Association of Purchasing Managers report, which came in sharply lower, sending the Dow down and bonds up, in expectation of interest rate cuts to come. Similarly, the German purchasing managers index was gloomy: so much for European Union, which was to keep global recession at bay. The latest equity market falls are almost certainly the start of a second, more permanent, correction.

There is no reason to believe that the current low prices are anything but an aberration: they have been brought about by collapse of demand from emerging markets; the poor balance of payments situation in many oil producing countries that has led them to flood the market and new extraction technologies which have reduced costs. None of these is a realistic reason for an agglomeration fever which, if allowed to continue untempered, will do no more than recreate the trusts John D Rockefeller built up at the start of the century. The place to begin with intervention is the \$86 billion takeover by Exxon of Mobil. Together, the companies believe they can make \$2.9 billion a year in cost reductions. Yippee for them. But it cannot be in the public interest for any one company to have 22 per cent of the US energy market.

In the reshaping of the seven sisters which is taking place, the combination of France's Total and Belgium's PetroFina, to create a European champion that will rank sixth in the world might seem like a natural response to those that have already taken place — notably BP-Amoco. All of this may be wonderful for shareholders but is appalling for consumers. The choice among oil providers is narrow enough without giving their voracious appetites — some of the best paid in the world — the chance to double their salaries and options at the expense of staff cuts.

Sure, efficiency dictates that the oil majors shrink in size. But it should not be at the expense of the consumer. The US Justice Department under Joel Klein has shown admirable diligence in opposing dominance in the telecommunications and new media markets. Similarly, in Europe, the competition commissioner, Karel Van Miert, has demonstrated that he is no pushover, as British Airways and American Airlines have learnt. It is time for them to refocus on the oil industry and put brakes on the juggernaut before it runs away.

Boxing clever

CARLTON'S strategy for digital television has been absolutely right. The public doesn't want the 200 channels that its rival, Sky, is promoting but a narrower, cost-effective package providing the movies and sport which are the real book. Unfortunately for Carlton, Rupert Murdoch was first out of the starting box and is using financial muscle in an effort to dominate the competition. Commissioned Karel Van Miert, has demonstrated that he is no pushover, as British Airways and American Airlines have learnt. It is time for them to refocus on the oil industry and put brakes on the juggernaut before it runs away.

Merger urges

LANGUISHING oil prices are behind the fashion for blockbuster oil mergers. But the oil price fluctuates on the basis of supply and demand and sentiment. The price of Brent crude, the standard measure, reached \$4.10 at the time of the build-up to the Gulf War in 1990 and is now a quarter of that. When the price was higher there were few suggestions that the oil companies should be broken up because of what turned out to be an upward blip in prices.

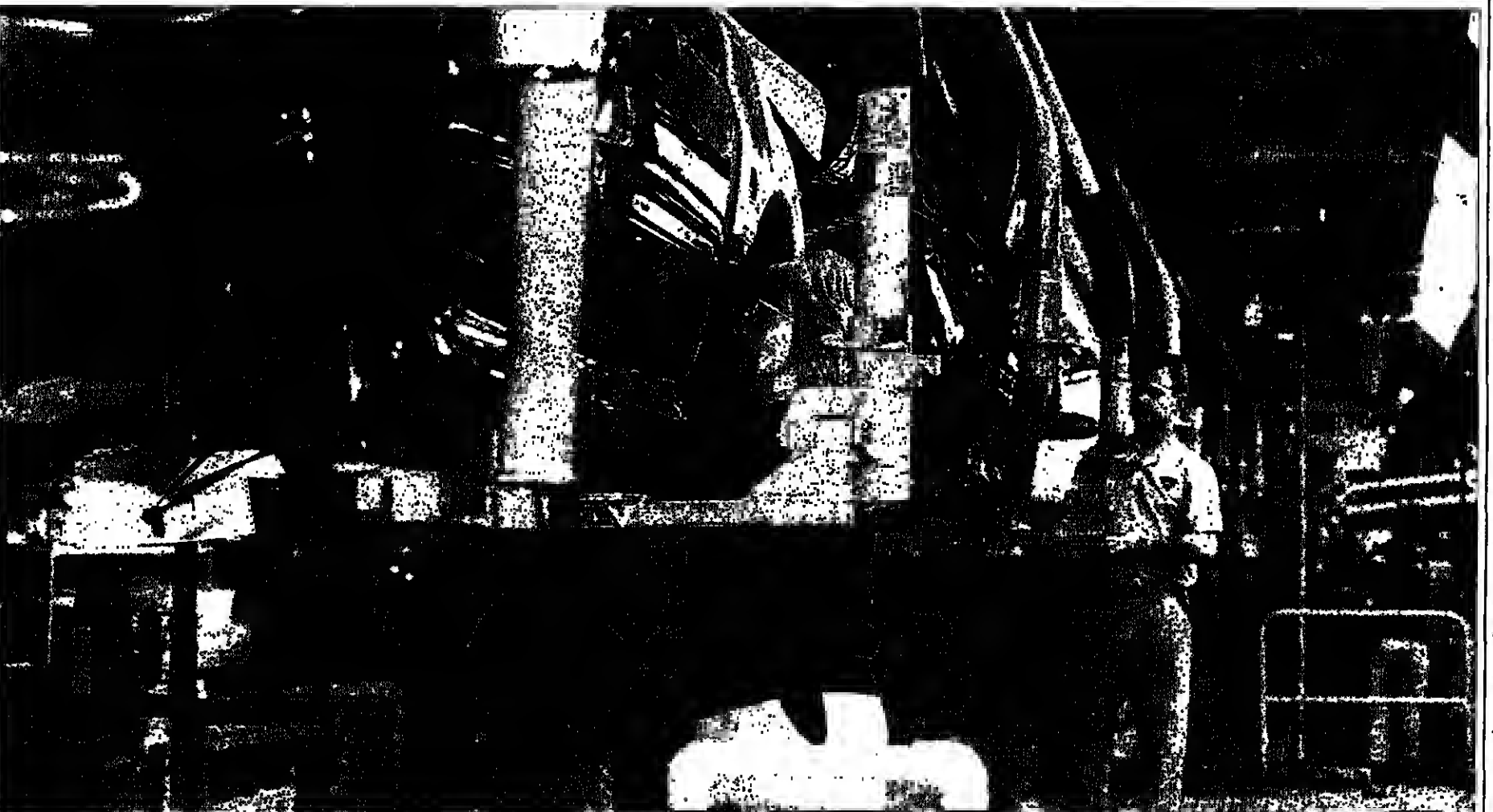
Three depart at bio-tech firm facing inquiry

Jill Treanor and Julia Finch

BITAIN'S bio-tech industry faced the prospect of a full-scale parliamentary investigation last night after a leading pharmaceutical research firm revealed it had misled investors about the prospects of two of its leading drugs and three of its senior executives left the company suddenly. In an episode which recalled the furore surrounding British Biotech earlier this year, the new management of Cortecs warned that the development of its drugs for bronchitis and osteoporosis were "not as advanced as has previously been indicated". Cortecs' acting chief executive, Dr Michael Flynn, who was appointed in June after the controversial departure of its founder, Glen Travers, will leave immediately, as will the two other executives, Dr Martin Preuvencens and Dr Geoff Hill. The company's share price crashed to an all-time low of 9.5p, down nearly 65 per cent on the day. The shares have traded as high as 24 — in 1996, when fund managers and investors expected the researchers to

discover important drugs that would sell in vast amounts. City sources said they expected the Stock Exchange to launch an inquiry into the company while Reuters news agency quoted a leading member of the House of Commons Science and Technology Select Committee raising the prospect of a parliamentary probe. The select committee is due to publish further details tomorrow of its summer inquiry into the British Biotech scandal which was prompted by a former employee, who questioned the viability of British Biotech's leading drugs in development. Dr Ian Gibson, MP, said he would raise the issue of Cortecs with the committee. "No doubt this will make people think [British Biotech] is not just a one-off — this is more widespread than we had thought," he said. Cortecs was facing controversy because of legal action brought by Mr Travers. He is suing the company he founded for £1.5 million, for wrongful dismissal. Cortecs is chaired by the former education secretary Lord Patten.

Jobs gained as changing lifestyles exploited



Booming... Peugeot workers in Ryton welcome the news of 900 new jobs to help cope with the plant's increasing workload

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN OBT

Weekend sting at Peugeot

Nicholas Bannister on a first for the motor industry and a boost for the Midlands

Manufacturing shrinks

Home services feel the pinch

Charlotte Denny

THE manufacturing sector is shrinking at its fastest rate since the end of the early 1990s recession while the previously buoyant consumer services sector is starting to feel the pinch as households cut optional spending, new figures revealed yesterday. Evidence of the gathering economic gloom helped slice nearly two pence off the value of sterling which closed last night in London at DM2.77. Almost 40 per cent of firms surveyed by the Chartered Institute for Purchasing and Supply reported a fall in new orders while just 16 per cent reported an improvement. One in five firms said they were making workers redundant. "This is yet more evidence of manufacturers struggling to survive in the current climate of both falling domestic and overseas demand," said Peter Thompson, the director of CIPS. "Worrying, declining

activity levels are increasingly being translated into more widespread redundancies." A Confederation of British Industry survey showed that the food and leisure industries are expecting lower turnover in the next three months. Nearly 60 per cent of consumer services firms questioned reported that they were more pessimistic about their business situation now than three months ago. One in four respondents said they had laid off workers in the last quarter. House prices fell last month by their biggest margin for nearly two years, as the economic slowdown began to take its toll on the domestic property market, writes Mark Aukerson. In the wake of recent London Revenue data showing the volume of housing transactions falling to a three-year low, the Halifax reported that average UK prices dropped by 0.6 per cent to £73,512 in November from £73,777 in October.

But in the City there's a silver lining for corporate financiers

Merger fees bonanza

Jill Treanor

CORPORATE finance experts were jumping with glee last night as they celebrated the prospect of healthy bonuses from the recent flurry of record-breaking mergers and takeovers. In the past 10 days alone, deals and mergers worth at least £136 billion have been clinched, raking in bumper fees for investment bankers. While stock markets stumbled and dealers and traders at firms such as Bankers Trust began the task of fighting for their jobs after the takeover by Deutsche Bank, corporate financiers were putting the finishing touches to some of the largest deals in history. The burst of activity is a sharp contrast to the late summer and early autumn when the stock market rout and bond market turbulence sent many deal-makers running for cover. The market for mergers and acquisitions all but shut up shop and, while the two-month gap in business will still take its toll on corporate

financiers' bonuses, this recent spate of activity came just in time to count for this year's pay deals. The calm that returned to the stock markets last month — perhaps only temporarily — provided the window for the mergers and acquisitions experts to pull off some deals that had been waiting in the pipeline. "These large transactions have been very long in the making and long in the consideration," said Charles Alexander, managing director at Rothschilds Investment Bank. Rolf Breuer, chief executive of Deutsche Bank, who entered the record books this week by buying Bankers Trust of the US for \$10.1 billion, admitted he had first started talking to his opposite number at Bankers Trust in September. Deutsche also gobbled up the Belgium operations of French bank Credit Lyonnais yesterday and has suggested that it has ambitions to buy other banks in Europe. Corporate financiers in the UK are falling over them-

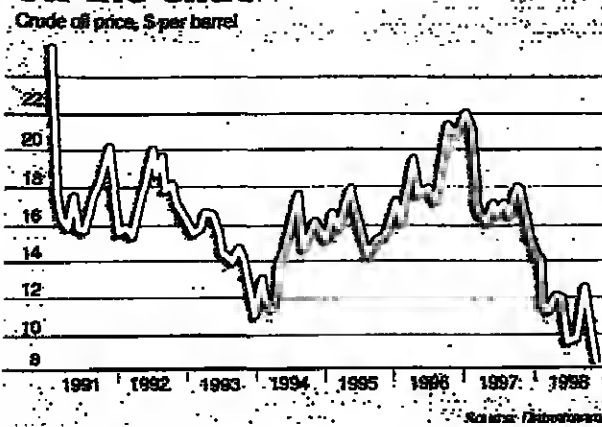
selves to find a partner for Barclays, which they see as vulnerable after the sudden departure of chief executive Martin Taylor. The oil industry kept the financiers busy with yesterday's merger news. Many of the deals have been international, but in the UK companies such as BTR and Siebe have tied the knot and smaller deals have also been finalised. The enormous size of many of these transactions means that corporate financiers will be taking large fees for sealing the deals. Some of them are paid retainers and then receive "success fees" for completing the transactions. Even before the summer

fall-out in the financial markets, many corporate financiers were excited by the size of the deals which were taking place. In the US, for instance, leading banks were merging by swapping their shares, which corporate financiers said would take place regardless of the level of the stock market, provided their shares fell in tandem. Other deals may have been driven by chief executives seeing share price plummet and looking for ways to improve return to shareholders. One corporate financier also pointed out yesterday that the markets were still far from normal and that marriages which required complex finance and bank loans were difficult to achieve. However, other experts believe the prospects for more complex deals are improving. "Two weeks ago, a lot of deals were put on hold because the banking wasn't there," said Ian Jamieson, head of UK corporate finance at Deloitte & Touche. "There were signs in the last week or so that the banking markets were returning."

'These large transactions have been very long in the making'

Majors wrestle with crisis

On the slide



Mergers cause double blow to North Sea jobs

US and European alliances are seen as answer to price plunge

Terry Macalister and Mark Tran in New York

THOUSANDS of oil industry jobs in Europe and the US are to go as a result of a new wave of mergers in the sector yesterday.

As many as 9,000 jobs, mostly in refining operations, could be lost with the \$77.2 billion (\$46.8 billion) alliance confirmed by Exxon and Mobil, creating the world's largest industrial company. The two groups aim to save \$2.8 billion from their combined operating costs of \$34 billion. Exxon employs 80,000 people while Mobil has 42,700 workers.

In Europe, the surprise \$28 billion takeover of Belgium's Petrofina by Total of France is expected to cost many North Sea exploration jobs.

Total said the merger would allow substantial cost savings in exploration and production as well as refining and marketing. The all-share deal, which would give the combined group pro-forma 1997 sales of \$52.9 billion (\$32 billion) and a net income of \$1.92 billion, is subject to approval from shareholders, and European and US regulators.

Shares in Total fell nearly 10 per cent, while Petrofina stock rose 20 per cent as traders took advantage of the 37 per cent premium over Friday's closing price. Total agreed to pay for the Belgian group.

The new US group, Exxon Mobil, will overtake Royal

Dutch Shell as the world's biggest energy group. Exxon Mobil will also surpass General Motors, as America's largest company, with \$303 billion in combined revenue last year.

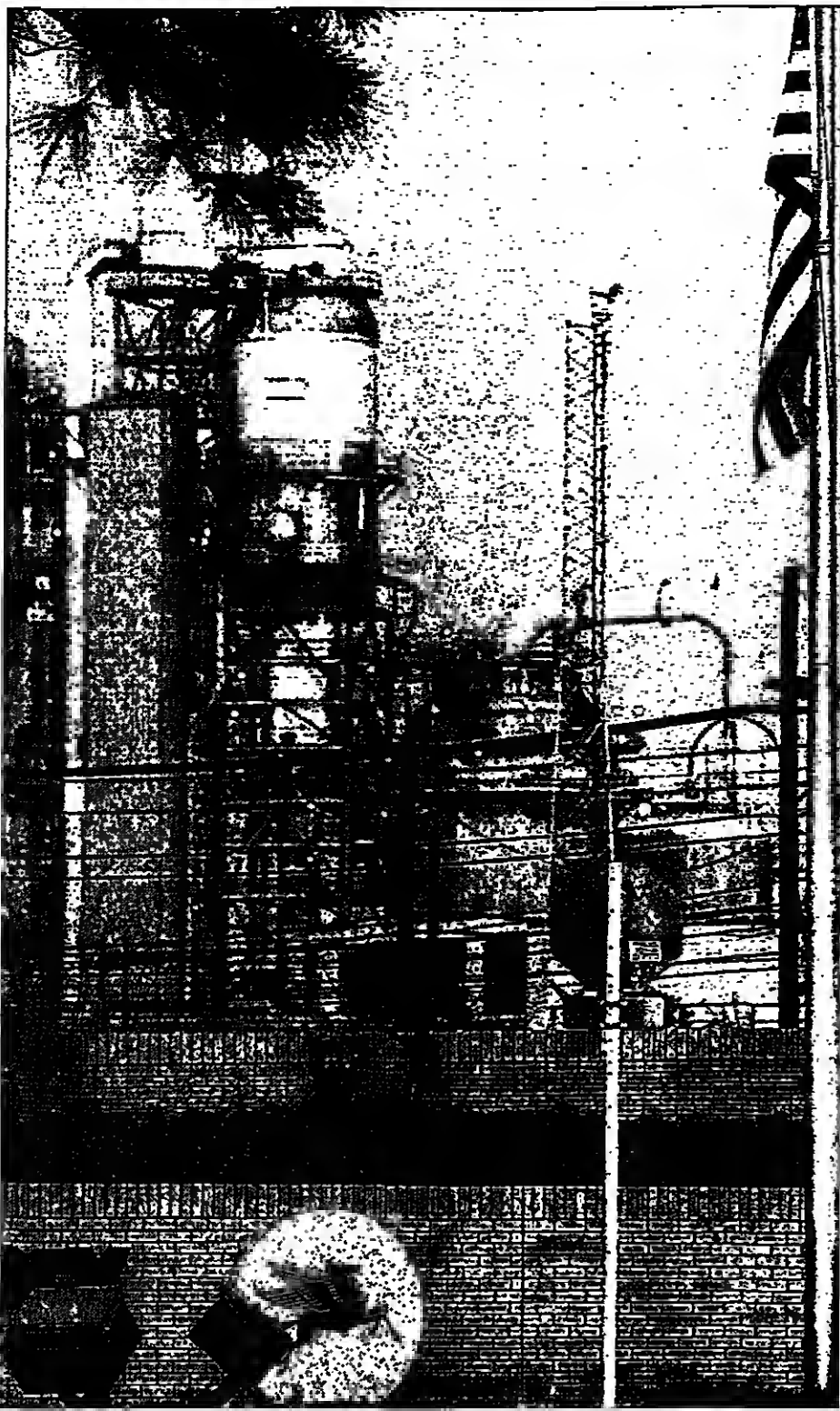
In Europe, Exxon trades as Esso and its North Sea exploration and production is done in partnership with Shell. A question mark hangs over jobs in that area.

The mergers come at a time when oil companies face a double bind - the lowest oil prices in more than 10 years and rising exploration costs.

"The move is part of a global change. Oil prices have practically been cut in half over the past year. All companies are seeking to survive in this new situation," said Total chairman Thierry Desmarest, who takes the same post in the combined group. "The business environment will be tougher than in past years."

Some analysts queried the wisdom of the deal. One said: "Total is paying a 37 per cent premium, that's 22 per cent higher than Petrofina's all-time high, in a market where oil prices are at all-time lows."

British Petroleum and Amoco started the oil merger trend when they announced a \$48.3 billion merger in August. BP believes that after merging with Amoco savings will amount to \$2 billion annually by 2000. Half of those savings will result from reducing the workforce by some 6,000. The BP-Amoco deal is being scrutinised by the Federal Trade Commission,



The Mobil refinery in Beaumont, Texas, seems set to become part of the world's largest industrial company under the merger announced yesterday

which will also have the task of examining Exxon's acquisition of Mobil.

The Exxon-Mobil merger will reassemble the two biggest chunks of John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Trust, broken up in 1911 by the Supreme Court in America's most famous anti-trust case. Mobil is the former Standard Oil of New York, while Exxon was once Standard Oil of New Jersey.

Anti-trust regulators are almost certain to demand divestitures of refineries and petrol stations. The companies' total share of US petrol sales came to about 20 per cent last year.

The group probably will have to sell some petrol stations in Europe, where Mobil is already involved in a joint venture with BP.

But regulators are expected to give the green light to the

merger because of the intense pressure to cut costs. Some smaller companies have begun to default on debt. With the Opec oil cartel unable to muster the necessary back production, the trend is for lower oil prices over the next few years.

"The ultimate beneficiary of all this will be the consumer," said Daniel Yergin, the chairman of Cambridge Energy Research Associates,

Shell ditches asset sell-off

Terry Macalister

ANGLIO-DUTCH oil company Shell has been forced to cancel ground-breaking plans to sell millions of pounds-worth of assets as the price of oil plummets worldwide.

Failure to find buyers for the assets in the North Sea and Thailand is embarrassing for Shell because industry experts had hailed the disposal programme as an important sign that company management was at last ushering in a new era of cost-consciousness.

The news comes just 24 hours after Shell was forced to call off a proposed European joint venture with Texaco of the US, although this has fuelled speculation that the two companies might be limbering up for a full-blown merger in reaction to the other corporate tie-ups that have swept the industry in recent weeks.

Shell, although this has fuelled speculation that the two companies might be limbering up for a full-blown merger in reaction to the other corporate tie-ups that have swept the industry in recent weeks.

Yesterday a Shell UK spokesman said the company was disappointed that it had not got the kind of offers that fully reflected the value of the assets.

"It is perhaps not surprising given the state of the oil markets. But Kingsfisher is still a valuable asset for us and we will continue to operate it alongside our partner Esso," he said.

Shell International also put a positive gloss on the collapse of talks with buyers in Thailand. "We withdrew the assets because we did not get the offer we wanted," a spokeswoman said. "But this is a promising business because there has been a 50 per cent increase in oil reserves in our key S1 concession."

The failure is not just a setback for Shell. It also means that other oil companies might be forced to re-evaluate asset values to reflect that crude prices are at their lowest in real terms for 25 years.

This means that other companies, such as Premier Oil, which are trying to sell off North Sea assets to raise much-needed funds could also find themselves disappointed. Shell traditionally has favoured joint ventures and alliances rather than corporate mergers. But the end of

the talks with Texaco has triggered talk of a wider tie-up. The Shell spokeswoman said merger talks would be "new to me" while Texaco said it would "consider all options to improve business and increase value for shareholders."

Fidel Ghelt, analyst with Fehnestock & Co in New York, said: "They may not be just forming an alliance but merging where they won't have different mindsets but a single set of goals."

But Alan Marshall, analyst with Robert Fleming Securities in London, said: "Shell does not need any more assets: it just needs to manage better the ones it has already."

Shell, which reported a 58 per cent drop in third quarter net profits to \$197 million, has been desperately trying to change its culture under the new chairmanship of Mark Moody-Stuart. Among the more unorthodox measures was to call in a Tibetan Buddhist priest to a recent management summit.

In September, Shell announced plans to close down its four regional headquarters including its London Shell Mex House. It revealed last month that 3,000 jobs would be cut from its European oil products division.

The price of feebleness

DAN ATKINSON finds fear stalking spot markets with oil cheaper than water

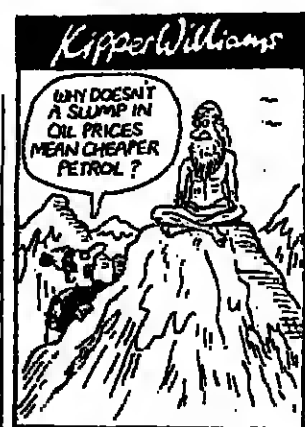
TWENTY years ago, striking tanker drivers on the shock troops of the Winter of Discontent - strangled Britain's petrol supplies and set the scene for the oil crisis that followed the Shah of Iran's hurried departure from Tehran in 1979.

Last night the oil price was sliding towards its lowest levels in real terms since the last Ford Anglia rolled off the production line in 1967. Panicked oil groups have rushed to merge to hold off slumping oil prices as motorists - already enjoying prices one-sixth per litre of the cost of mineral water in a London pub - anticipate the fruits of cut-price competition at the petrol pump. Analysts agree, with the most pessimistic predicting a rapid dive into single figures for the price of the benchmark Brent

North Sea crude from last night's \$10.44 a barrel for January delivery. Only 24 hours earlier, they had suggested \$10.64 as the technical support level below which the price would disintegrate.

Inventories are thought to be at an all-time high, and US supplies were yesterday reported by the American Petroleum Institute to be 8 per cent higher in the week to November 20 than during the same period of 1997.

Ironically, the cause of the price slump is no different from the cause of the vertiginous price rises of the 1970s: the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). But whereas once the oil cartel's summit meetings struck fear into the industrialised west, last week's OPEC meeting in Vienna was so feeble and indecisive that its conclusion triggered the latest price falls.



one analyst has suggested that "green taxes" loaded on fossil fuels may result in the West having a recession, with slumping oil prices but without the low-cost fuel that could launch a recovery.

£3 billion set aside for former coalfield areas

Martin Wainwright

TARGETED partnership funds of almost £3 billion are to be invested in England's wrecked former coalfield areas, the deputy prime minister, John Prescott, announced yesterday.

A long-term package of new and redirected funding, topped up with surpluses from the old British Coal pension fund, will be monitored to prevent "pouring money away" on palliative measures rather than regeneration.

"The components of the package were criticised as being too modest by the Coalfields Communities Campaign, an all-party group that has lobbied hard for strategic funding since the last major pit closures in the late 1980s. Scotland and Wales were also upset at the almost exclusively English nature of the package, though Mr Prescott forecast that extra measures would come with devolution."

The programme will aim at practicalities, including the possible retraining of ex-miners to work on the railways.

Announcing the package at a coalfields conference in Fetherie, County Durham, the deputy prime minister said: "Our rail companies are short of about 1,000 drivers. Well, the men are there in the coalfield areas, so perhaps we can begin to get them from the coalfields to working and driving trains and getting a better performance."

The £3 billion will be invested over three years, with a further £350 million to set up a

regeneration trust and an enterprise fund to tap existing skills in areas such as South Yorkshire and the North-east and prevent a talent drain to more prosperous areas.

One of the Government's models, following a report by the Coalfields Task Force last summer, is the new Barnsley Design Centre, whose director, Robert Fellows, welcomed the targeted approach. Mr Prescott said the package was recompense for the abrupt nature of the pit closures of the 1970s and 1980s, which had left the former coalfields reeling.

"We need a long-term, 10-year-plus, programme. Today is just one step along the road. Over the next three years we are investing £750 million on housing, £1.1 billion on employment and training and £500 million on regeneration in local authority coalfield areas," he said.

Juan Dixon, of the Coalfields Communities Campaign, said the inclusion of existing funds in the package meant the total was less than it appeared. But, she said: "The most important thing is that the Government has pledged a long-term commitment. This is a ray of hope after years of decline."

The miners' pension surplus of £10 million will be divided equally between English, Scottish and Welsh former coalfields. But the use of the surplus brought criticism from mining unions. Bledyn Hancock, general secretary of the pit supervisors' body Nacods said the move was "a disgrace".



Help at last... Eastington Colliery in County Durham was closed by Michael Heseltine in 1992

News in brief

Three Barings chiefs are banned for incompetence

THREE former directors of the crashed Barings banking group were declared "incompetent" yesterday by a High Court judge and face a ban from Britain's boardrooms lasting up to 15 years each, as a result of their failures to detect and prevent the activities of Singapore-based rogue trader Nick Leeson.

Former main board director and head of financial products Ronald Baker and former Barings investment subsidiary director and head of settlements Anthony Gentry had displayed a degree of incompetence such as to justify keeping them away from management of any company, said Mr Justice Jonathan Parker.

The length of the banning orders - which could be up to 15 years per person - will be determined at a future hearing. Barings, Britain's oldest merchant bank, collapsed into bankruptcy in February 1995 after Leeson's \$200 million gambles came to light. The Department of Trade and Industry applied for banning orders against 10 former Barings officers, seven of whom did not contest the orders and received prohibitions of up to three years. - Dan Atkinson

Pension clawback attacked

UNION leaders yesterday threatened to name and shame the blue-chip companies which seize millions of pounds every year from the pensions of their retired employees.

More than 2.5 million pensioners are affected by the practice, known as "clawback", whereby employers deduct the equivalent of the basic state pension or up to one-and-a-half times the lower earnings limit from the sum used to calculate pensions. This corporate raiding takes around £1,700 from the average person's pension every year, and because it is not scaled according to earnings, the lowest paid are the hardest hit.

Around 45 per cent of private-sector and 6 per cent of public-sector schemes claw back pensions. Some of the worst offenders are the blue-chip companies with large surpluses including J&Sainsbury, Anglian Water, BOC Group, Courage, Ford and NatWest, although some companies have already abolished clawback - Glaxo Holdings, Jacobs Bakeries and Pearl Assurance now allocate the full pension to retired employees. - Liz Stuart

Buzz goes on to infinity

BUZZ Lightyear is indeed set for "infinity and beyond", the catchphrase of the toy spaceman in the film Toy Story. Despite the film being two years old - an infinity in the world of children's entertainment - Buzz is once again soaring in the Christmas sales, according to the Character Group, which owns rights to Buzz, his sidekick Woody and other stars such as Spice Girl dolls and the Teletubbies.

Character's chairman, Richard King, said sales of Buzz were higher this year than two years ago when the film was released. He believes the spaceman will stay in the charts for years, boosted by Toy Story II, which is due out in 2000.

He was speaking after reporting a rise in profits of more than 50 per cent to £7.3 million. Sales for the year to the end of August rose from \$41 million to \$69 million.

The company escaped the worst of the Christmas sales slump because of early ordering of seasonal merchandise. But Mr King said the business had felt the impact of the slowdown in consumer spending. - Roger Cowie

TOURIST TRIPS - BANK SELLS

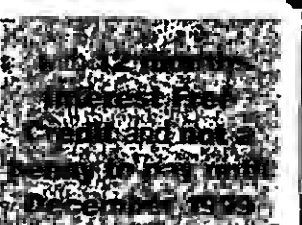
Australia 2,508	Germany 2,771	Malaysia 6,277	Singapore 2,71
Austria 19,97	Greece 452,29	Malta 8,025	South Africa 9,002
Belgium 55,83	Hong Kong 12,34	Netherlands 3,048	Spain 229,78
Canada 2,439	India 70,28	New Zealand 2,991	Sweden 13,07
Cyprus 1,706	Ireland 1,022	Norway 12,06	Switzerland 2,201
Denmark 10,34	Israel 6,91	Portugal 274,26	Turkey 478,265
Finland 8,252	Italy 2,897	Saudi Arabia 5,992	USA 1,608
France 9,062			

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Racing

Hennessy fourth ready for quick reappearance. **Graham Rock reports**

Doyle set to take on Doran's Pride

BOSS DOYLE, who finished a respectable fourth to Teton Mill in the Hennessy Gold Cup on Saturday, might make a surprisingly quick reappearance against Doran's Pride and Imperial Call in the John Durkan Chase at Punchestown on Sunday.

Mouse Morris was pleased with the way his horse had recovered from a hard race in testing ground. "He's come out of it well, and the Punchestown race is a possibility, but I won't make a decision until later in the week," he said.

Doran's Pride, third in the last year's Cheltenham Gold Cup, is unbeaten this autumn, while Imperial Call, who won the steeplechasing championship three seasons ago, has shown signs of returning to his best form in recent races.

The Irish-trained Hill Society was one of the best backed horses with Ladbrokes for the Mitsubishi Shogun Triple Creek Chase at Sandown on Saturday, and was clipped from 9-2 to 4-1. "He worked well this morning," said Noel Meade, Direct Route (8-1 to 7-1) and Mandy's Mantino (10-1 to 10-1) also attracted support, while Edredon Bleu was eased from 2-1 to 9-4.

Veneta Williams's Teton Mill landed a substantial touch for his owners, The Winning Line, in the Hennessy Handicap, representing the same combination was the subject of a gamble with William Hill for the handicap hurdle they sponsor on Saturday's Sandown card, and was cut from 10-1 to 9-2.

Hill's also reported good money for the ante-post favourite, Blowing Wind, who is now 3-1 from 9-2, Martin



Flat out... Salty Behaviour (right) gets the better of Most Respectful on the sand at Southwell yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: GEORGE SHELTON

Pipe's horse is 12-1 joint second favourite for the Champion Hurdle, together with Saturday's Fighting Fifth Hurdle winner, Dato Star.

Noel Meade made three enquiries for the Hill race, but he announced yesterday that

neither Nomadic nor Aboriginal would make the journey from Ireland. The trainer is likely to be represented by his progressive four-year-old, Snow Dragon, an 8-1 chance with the sponsors. "I'll consult the owners, but he's 90 per cent certain to run,"

Meade adds. Philip Hobbs will make a decision on the participation of Polar Prospect nearer the weekend. The champion hurdler Istabraq was clipped from 7-4 to 6-4 by Ladbrokes to repeat his Cheltenham victory in March and yesterday his owner, J. P.

McManus, strengthened his hand for the big races by purchasing Le Coudray, France's leading four-year-old hurdler. His new acquisition will be trained in Ireland, probably by Aidan O'Brien.

The winner of four of his last five races, Le Coudray "has lots of quality, can jump quickly, and has plenty of stamina," according to his present trainer, Marcel Roland. "All I hope is that if Le Coudray does not adapt to his obstacles, then he will be sent back to me," he said.

SPORTS NEWS 13

Reveley, Niven have field day at Newcastle

Ken Oliver

MARY REVELEY and her jockey Peter Niven have long been a standing dish at Newcastle and yesterday racegoers there had their biggest ever feast from the mighty duo.

The lady from Saltburn checked up a massive 10,708-1 four-timer, while Niven weighed in with a 5,354-1 treble.

Niven's winners were Kingennie, Alpine Panther and Time of Flight - all trained by Reveley, who also scored with Lord Lamb, who was ridden by Alan Dempsey.

Alpine Panther, carrying the colours of Peter Savill, chairman of the British Horseracing Board, gave Reveley the third leg of the quartet with victory in the John Collier Handicap Hurdle.

The five-year-old, shouldering top-weight of 12st, jumped to the front two out and held off Palace Of Gold by two lengths, with Merry Masquerade, stablemate of the winner, third.

Unseating the 13-2 winner, Reveley, who is still at a loss to explain the way Seven Towers and Marengo ran so badly at Newbury on Saturday, said: "Everybody was saying that we must have the virus, but that is not so."

Kingennie's victory, at 33-1, in the European Breeder's Fund Joe Wake Novice Hurdle, represented a notable feat for Joan Niven, who not only bred the mare, but also her jockey.

The bay, whose dam Loch Brandy gave Niven his first winner as an amateur rider, surprised her connections with her six-length hurdling debut victory over Ahraydoubloyou.

"I thought she would be a bit green today because everything we have asked her to do she has done very greenly," explained Reveley.

"I thought she would have a good look at everything, but they make fools of you," she said.

Noshinnakin, squeezed to 8-1 favourite by several four-figure wagers, certainly made a fool of his supporters, returning 11th of the 12 to finish.

Lord Lamb, the even-money favourite, initiated the Reveley foursome with a comfortable victory in the opening Tommy O'Connor Novice Hurdle.

The grey's debut over timber had been postponed after fog caused the card at Wetherby a fortnight ago to be abandoned, but he made up for time lost with a two-length beating of Tressaloe.

In view of Reveley's three wins prior to the concluding Harry Dixon Standard Open National Hunt Flat Race, it was a surprise to see that Time of Flight and Supreme Fortune, her two runners, were allowed to start at 20-1.

They came back first and second, with the veteran-partnered Time of Flight getting the better of Dempsey and Supreme Fortune by half a length.

Only Dan De Man stood between Reveley and a five-timer as he defied the stable's Wynyard Lady in the Philip Cussons Conditional Jockeys' Handicap Hurdle, thereby confounding racecourse rumour that he would find the soft ground against him.

Plumpton

GRAHAM ROCK	TOP FORM
12.40	Medication
1.10	Medication
1.40	Medication
2.10	Medication
2.40	Medication
3.10	Medication
3.40	Medication

Good: Good to soft, soft in places. * Denotes blunders. * Top form rating. Seven-day winners: None.

Marked Best Time: 12.40 Pte De Gifford, 3.10 St Galfonso, Galfonso, Wynyard Lady. Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. F, Fall.

12.40 BRIGHTON NOVICE CLAIMING HURDLE

1	12.40	Medication	12.40	Medication
2	1.10	Medication	1.10	Medication
3	1.40	Medication	1.40	Medication
4	2.10	Medication	2.10	Medication
5	2.40	Medication	2.40	Medication
6	3.10	Medication	3.10	Medication
7	3.40	Medication	3.40	Medication

Medication: 12.40 Pte De Gifford, 3.10 St Galfonso, Galfonso, Wynyard Lady. Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. F, Fall.

1.10 HENFIELD NOVICE CHASE

1	1.10	Medication	1.10	Medication
2	1.40	Medication	1.40	Medication
3	2.10	Medication	2.10	Medication
4	2.40	Medication	2.40	Medication
5	3.10	Medication	3.10	Medication
6	3.40	Medication	3.40	Medication

Medication: 1.10 Pte De Gifford, 3.10 St Galfonso, Galfonso, Wynyard Lady. Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. F, Fall.

1.40 GALLERIE CHALLENGE CUP AMATEUR RIDERS' HANDICAP CHASE

1	1.40	Medication	1.40	Medication
2	2.10	Medication	2.10	Medication
3	2.40	Medication	2.40	Medication
4	3.10	Medication	3.10	Medication
5	3.40	Medication	3.40	Medication

Medication: 1.40 Pte De Gifford, 3.10 St Galfonso, Galfonso, Wynyard Lady. Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. F, Fall.

2.10 DITCHING NOVICE HURDLE

1	2.10	Medication	2.10	Medication
2	2.40	Medication	2.40	Medication
3	3.10	Medication	3.10	Medication
4	3.40	Medication	3.40	Medication

Medication: 2.10 Pte De Gifford, 3.10 St Galfonso, Galfonso, Wynyard Lady. Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. F, Fall.

2.40 OLD HOLDINGS HANDICAP CHASE

1	2.40	Medication	2.40	Medication
2	3.10	Medication	3.10	Medication
3	3.40	Medication	3.40	Medication

Medication: 2.40 Pte De Gifford, 3.10 St Galfonso, Galfonso, Wynyard Lady. Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. F, Fall.

3.10 PETER PANNEY 20TH BIRTHDAY NOVICE HANDICAP HURDLE

1	3.10	Medication	3.10	Medication
2	3.40	Medication	3.40	Medication

Medication: 3.10 Pte De Gifford, 3.10 St Galfonso, Galfonso, Wynyard Lady. Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. F, Fall.

3.40 M.B.L. EASTBOURNE HANDICAP HURDLE

1	3.40	Medication	3.40	Medication
2	4.10	Medication	4.10	Medication
3	4.40	Medication	4.40	Medication

Medication: 3.40 Pte De Gifford, 3.10 St Galfonso, Galfonso, Wynyard Lady. Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. F, Fall.

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PLUMPTON 142 152

WOLVERHAMPTON 143 153

ALL COURSES COMMENTARY 09064 700 140

FOR RESULTS 09064 700 150

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GRAHAM ROCK	TOP FORM
1.00	Medication
1.40	Medication
2.10	Medication
2.40	Medication
3.10	Medication
3.40	Medication

Good: Good to soft, soft in places. * Denotes blunders. * Top form rating. Seven-day winners: None.

Marked Best Time: 12.40 Pte De Gifford, 3.10 St Galfonso, Galfonso, Wynyard Lady. Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. F, Fall.

1.00 RICHMONDSHIRE CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS' HANDICAP HURDLE

1	1.00	Medication	1.00	Medication
2	1.40	Medication	1.40	Medication
3	2.10	Medication	2.10	Medication
4	2.40	Medication	2.40	Medication
5	3.10	Medication	3.10	Medication
6	3.40	Medication	3.40	Medication

Medication: 1.00 Pte De Gifford, 3.10 St Galfonso, Galfonso, Wynyard Lady. Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. F, Fall.

2.30 ELLENTON JUVENILE NOVICE HURDLE 2YD

1	2.30	Medication	2.30	Medication
2	3.10	Medication	3.10	Medication
3	3.40	Medication	3.40	Medication

Medication: 2.30 Pte De Gifford, 3.10 St Galfonso, Galfonso, Wynyard Lady. Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. F, Fall.

3.00 NORTH YORKSHIRE HANDICAP CHASE

1	3.00	Medication	3.00	Medication
2	3.40	Medication	3.40	Medication
3	4.10	Medication	4.10	Medication
4	4.40	Medication	4.40	Medication

Medication: 3.00 Pte De Gifford, 3.10 St Galfonso, Galfonso, Wynyard Lady. Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. F, Fall.

1.30 SCOTTON SELLING HANDICAP HURDLE

281	F-P080	Kellyman (29) B Elson		354	13PUS Prince
	6-1-2	Mr S & O'Ryan (?)	—	355	62230 La
282	80-40	McKee (254) J Howard Johnson 4-11-2	62	356	52P-3 La
283	25022	McKee (254) J Howard Johnson 4-11-2	62	357	332-0 La
	25022	McKee (254) J Howard Johnson 4-11-2	62	358	12-246
284	F4P6	McKee (254) J Howard Johnson 4-11-2	62	359	12-246
285	20-570	McKee (254) J Howard Johnson 4-11-2	62	360	12-246
286	P080-0	McKee (254) J Howard Johnson 4-11-2	62	361	12-246
287	U030-0	McKee (254) J Howard Johnson 4-11-2	62	362	12-246

Cricket

Mike Selvey in Perth says England's great enigma, enjoying his seventh recall to the colours, is still to convince under true Test pressure

Hick keeps his foot in the door

THE doors to the England cricket team swing open and shut these days like those of the Golden Horse shoe during happy hour in Dodge City.

One minute Alex Tudor is the new recruit on an educational tour, the next he is a star; Mark Butcher cannot buy a run, then plays, in the circumstances, one of the great Ashes innings and now cannot get a run again; and John Crawley and Graeme Hick are playing musical chairs once more as they did at the back of the summer.

Until a couple of days ago Hick's status, according to Alistair Stewart, remained strictly as a cover for Mike Atherton, just as it had been in Brisbane. And with Atherton's return, he was all but on the plane back home, set to do a bit of benefit organising before making the journey back here for the one-day series in the new year.

Instead, in the wake of his last-fifth innings in Perth on Sunday evening and the worrying condition of Graham Thorpe's back, not only is he now regarded as a *bona fide* member of the touring party but he has probably overtaken the unfortunate Crawley in the pecking order.

Yesterday in Perth, where the team were enjoying a spot of post-Test R and R, the England tour manager Graham Gooch confirmed that Hick would be staying put while at the same time expressing his concern about Thorpe's condition, which caused him to pull out of the second Test.

The Surrey batsman missed the one-day series at the end of last winter's Caribbean tour because of back trouble and, after surgery, the last three Tests of the summer, returning only for Surrey's final championship match of the season.

Sensibly, he has been nursed on this trip and has responded with an unbeaten double century and two half-centuries, one of those undefeated as well, in the six innings he has played to date. Of all the batsmen in the party he is the only one with a commendable track record against Australia.

"There is some uncertainty about his condition," Gooch

admitted, "and it was sensible to keep Hick here until after the third Test in Adelaide. He was due back here shortly after that in any case."

"Thorpe saw a specialist on Saturday and has had physiotherapy. It does not appear to be the same condition as he suffered in the summer but we still do not know how he will shape up. He will be having a net session here and another in Melbourne on Friday. But, if the trouble persists, we will certainly have to review the situation."

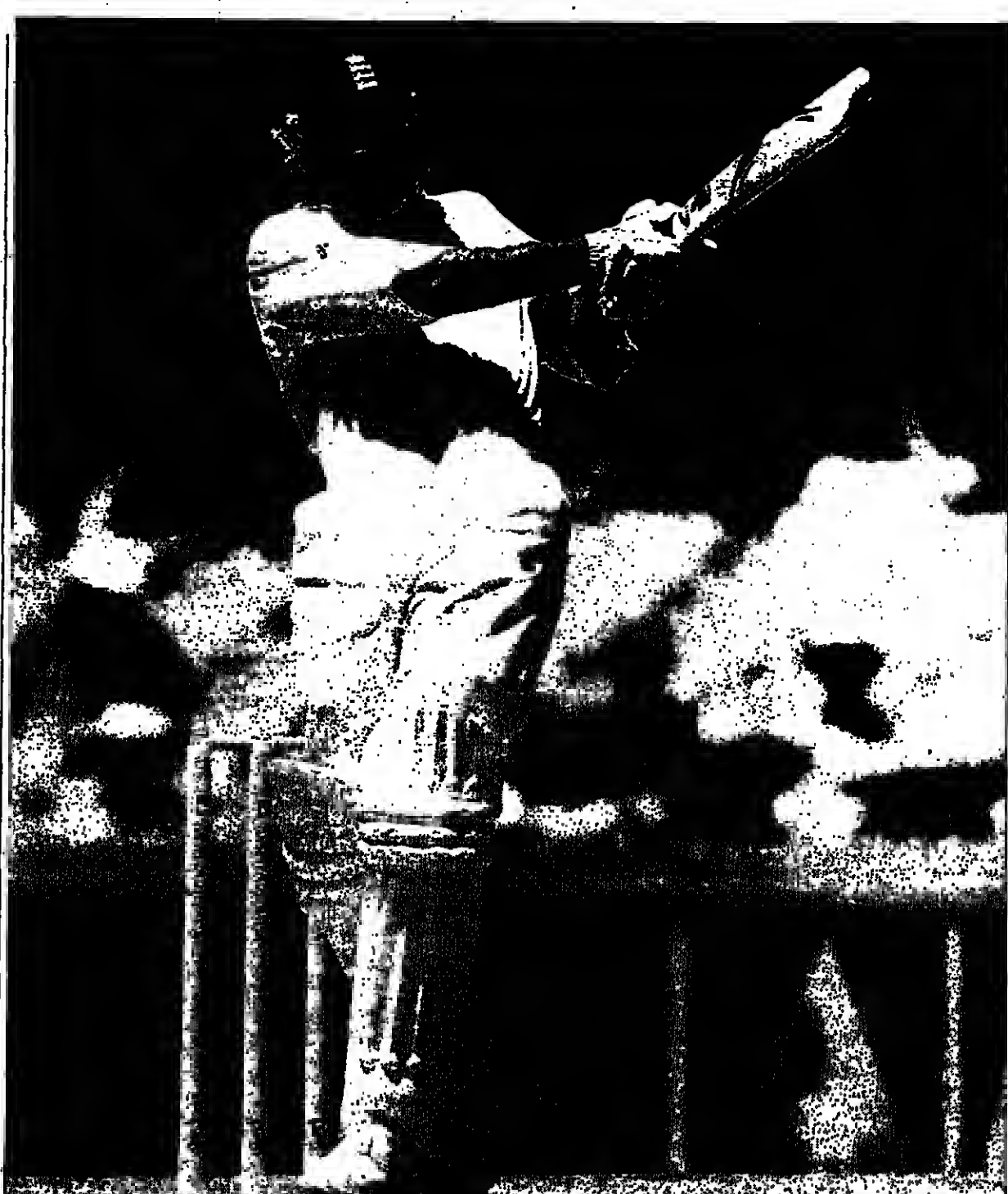
Hick's resurgence is unlikely for Crawley who, having played as well as anyone in the early part of the tour, battled poorly in both innings in Perth. Quite how psychologically damaging has been the assault he suffered in Cairns is anyone's guess but he does not look the same batsman.

It would be wrong, though, to place too much store on Hick's innings, exhilarating though it was, simply because of the combination of circumstances surrounding it. When Hick went to the crease, England were 67 for five in their second innings, still 61 shy of making Australia bat a second time.

He was on his seventh recall to the side strictly as a makeweight, batting in the twilight zone at seven, had dropped two catches, one of them relatively straightforward for a catcher of his quality, and made a hapless second-ball nought in the first innings.

The game was shot and so, it seemed yet again, was Hick's international future. There was not an awful lot for him to lose and so he played as he did. For 33 balls on Sunday evening, as he tore into Australia's fastest bowler and twice dumped him high over midwicket, it was glorious and unconstrained. But next morning, when the adrenalin had dissipated and the faint glimmer of hope in the game began to disappear, he needed to think about it.

The more he did, the more he had been fantastic, unimpaired stuff but it was not an innings that could have been played from the upper order in the first innings of a match. And that should be the acid test of a Hick resurrection.



Hick in nick... Damien Fleming is struck for four but a fine innings of 68 was too little too late to save England. BEN CURTIS

SPORTS NEWS 15

Counties to vote for two divisions

David Hopps on why the meeting at Lord's will agree an up-and-down future

ENGLISH county cricket will embrace the more competitive era it has come to accept as paramount for its survival when the First-Class Forum opens over the next two days to confront a new century with a two-divisional championship.

The county game has been on being on the edge of the real world. But in the winter meeting at Lord's starting today it will pronounce itself attuned to the spirit of the times by introducing promotion and relegation by 2000.

Two years of lobbying will finally bear fruit for Lord MacLaurin, chairman of the England and Wales Cricket Board, when he is barring a remarkable eleven-hour change of heart, the counties will support two divisions by a sizeable majority. The alternative, an additional tier of regional cricket, seems to have little support.

Only a year ago MacLaurin suffered a mortifying reversal when the first-class counties privately expressed their resistance to such a restructuring and then rejected a muddy compromise, based on an American-style Conference system, that brought widespread ridicule.

Now most counties accept that "promotion and relegation" are the necessary buzz-words to arouse interest, not only among a sceptical younger audience but within a contemptuous, football-driven media.

Somerset are one county expected to switch their vote in favour of two divisions. Their secretary Peter Anderson expressed the prevalent view when he explained: "People have woken up to the marketing facts. County cricket has a loyal membership but it is not being replenished; and every newspaper, whether it is cricket, darts or go-kart racing, likes to talk about promotion and relegation."

Assurances of financial safeguards have also convinced the weakest first-class counties that all 18 of them remain sacrosanct and that there is no desire to hurry some into bankruptcy in the name of a "leaner and fitter" first-class circuit.

Derbyshire are one small county to have abandoned their resistance. Their chairman Vic Brown said: "We needed to have the financial safety net and we are happy that is the case. The new TV deal has brought nearly double our previous income and, understandably, Sky and Channel 4 want the most attractive game possible."

Glamorgan's committee were expected last night to restate their opposition to two divisions but even their secretary Mike Fakin recognised the need "to be pragmatic and enter the debate". Counties

Promotion and relegation are the necessary buzz-words to arouse interest

such as Glamorgan will rely on the adoption of three up and three down, a large turnover in two divisions of nine, to curb pressure for an open transfer system.

England's best players, in any event, will be concerned with an extended programme of seven Tests and six or seven one-day internationals every summer; considering such demands, the move to them being centrally contracted by the board looks inevitable.

Two divisions is no panacea. It is not only implacable opponents who fear a more desperate need for victories will risk an increase in sub-standard pitches or reduce opportunities for young players. But, as Lancashire's secretary Dave Edmundson pointed out: "The players are 75 per cent in favour of change and some of the influence has come from them. Committees have had to take notice of those who play the game."

ANC hits out at 'lily-white' teams

SOUTH AFRICA'S ruling African National Congress party has stoked the controversy over the racial make-up of the country's rugby and cricket national teams by labelling them "lily-white".

The intervention came after the Sports Minister Steve Tshwete was criticised by opposition parties for saying that he was "fed up" that the two sides were almost exclusively white.

"Nobody can dispute that both rugby and cricket national teams remain lily-white," the ANC said in a statement, "despite the fact that calls for their transformation were made more than five years ago."

"In cricket Makhaya Ntini and Paul Adams have proved themselves beyond any doubt, yet the national selectors left them out in the cold for the Test match against the West Indies for the first time in years."

Peter Pollock, the convenor of selectors, defended the "all-white" squad when it was announced by saying it was picked purely on merit.

South Africa's cricketers beat West Indies for the first time in a Test on Monday and the rugby Springboks aim to complete a grand slam and break the world record of 17 consecutive international victories when they play England on Saturday.

as saying that the government would name a special commission next year to intervene to promote black players into national squads, a policy criticised by the opposition. National Party as posing, "a serious threat to the bright future of South African sport" and as being "inherently racist".

The ANC responded by accusing the National Party of persistently defending white racism in sport.

Sohail's remarks rile Pakistan selectors

PAKISTAN'S chairman of selectors Wasim Bari yesterday responded to criticism by the captain Amir Sohail, saying that on performance alone the opening bat was not worth his place in the Test side.

The captain's decision to air his views has also been brought to the attention of the Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Wasim added: "I don't know yet if we would be lodging a complaint against Sohail. The man is under pressure and is desperately trying to safeguard his captaincy. On performance, I am sorry to say, he doesn't get into the team. The only way he can retain his place is as captain."

Sohail, who made 15 and two in the seven-wicket defeat by Zimbabwe at Peshawar on Monday, which followed a 1-0 series home defeat by Australia, said

command respect over his players. And he can't because 20 months back he had levelled betting and match-fixing allegations against his team-mates.

Cycling

Virenque fights the fire

William Fotheringham

RICHARD VIRENQUE continued his fight to protect his name and career yesterday after the judge investigating drug-taking in the Festina team told him that tests showed he had used banned drugs.

The Frenchman has maintained his innocence since July 8 when French customs officers on the Belgian border impounded a Festina car conveying a supply of steroids, growth hormone and a blood-booster, erythropoietin (EPO), destined for the Tour de France.

Virenque's personal masser and team manager maintain in their testimonies that they supplied and injected him with drugs. Yesterday he seemed not to believe the evidence presented by Judge Patrick Koll.

"All the biological parameters and tests prove scientifically that I am not doped," Virenque said after leaving the judge's office in Lille. He added that the report "reveals no trace of steroids, growth hormone, corticoids, amphetamines or masking products".

Virenque's defence in the on-going investigation rests partly on the fact that his blood-solid (haematocrit) level was just below the 50 per cent limit which the International Cycling Union considers healthy. A high haematocrit level can indicate the use of EPO. One of the report's authors, Dr Francois Bressolle, pointed out that Virenque's level of 49.3 per cent was still far higher than the average of 42-44 per cent.

Bressolle maintained that additional scientific evidence, based on the level of a protein, transferrin, proved Virenque had taken EPO. But Virenque is adamant that the report and the investigation are a plot to destroy him.

"If you are objective, you will take into account the undeniable biological parameters which prove I'm innocent," he said. "But if you want to bring me down, then you will take into account the biased interpretation."

"Today I'm relieved. I'm sure this is the end of a nightmare." But it may instead prove to be the end of his career. Virenque has been sacked by Festina and his only serious option for next year, the Italo-Belgian team sponsored by the Mapei chemicals company, depends on him being "clean".

Rugby League

Luyt plans new use for Ellis Park

Andy Wilson

LOUIS LUYT, the controversial former president of the South African Rugby Football Union, has offered to stage major rugby league fixtures at Ellis Park, the Springbok stadium in Johannesburg.

Luyt is attending the meeting of the newly formed Rugby League International Federation in Sydney and yesterday submitted proposals to promote rugby league in South Africa, including providing the pre-season World Nines with a long-term home.

Luyt was overthrown as Saru's president this year after Nelson Mandela had ordered an inquiry into corruption and racism within the organisation but he retains a major financial interest in Ellis Park and is keen to maximise its use.

Neil Tunncliffe, the chief executive of the Rugby Football League, gave Luyt's offer a cautious welcome. "South Africa has the potential to become a major league power," he said, "but the federation has to be convinced that the terms are right."

unlikely to go ahead. The federation also confirmed the itinerary for next autumn's Tri-Nations series. Great Britain will play Australia in Brisbane on October 22 and New Zealand in Auckland the following Friday. The final will take place at Sydney's new, 120,000-seat Olympic Stadium on November 5. Matches will be coupled with curtain-raisers.

The go-ahead for the 2000 World Cup in Europe is expected to be given by the federation today. The competition will feature 16 teams, including all four home nations and the newcomers Italy and Russia.

The Adalade Rams, owned by Rupert Murdoch's News Limited, were disbanded yesterday. Murdoch established the Rams in the Australian Rules stronghold of South Australia as part of his rebel Super League competition in 1995. The Rams have effectively been sacrificed as a cost-cutting measure, with the Gold Coast Chargers expected to go the same way today.

Gateshead Thunder have beaten off competition from several other Super League clubs to sign Brian Carney, the 23-year-old winger who was outstanding for Ireland in the recent internationals against France and Scotland.

Squash

Angry Eyles reported to his presidential self

Richard Jago in Doha

THE world champion Rodney Eyles is to be reported to the Professional Squash Association, of which he is the president, after losing both his title and his temper yesterday.

The 31-year-old Australian hurled the ball angrily at the referee Jack Allen immediately after his 12-15, 15-10, 15-13, 17-16 defeat in the second round to the unseeded Belgian Stefan Casteleyn.

"There is no need for that," Allen called to Eyles, who had spent two games berating him and criticising his decisions.

The incident is not an uncommon spectacle but this week there has been something of an outbreak that suggests the sport is drifting too far in favour of the players.

Allen certainly made mistakes but no more than might have been expected in a high-pressure match played more than usual in the front part of the court.

Casteleyn, who took advantage of Eyles's difficulty in reaching the ball on a deadball court, said: "There were mistakes on a couple of crucial points but it was not easy and I am not going to criticise. I don't think Rodney would if he had won."

The upset further cleared the top half of the draw of well-known names for Scotland's Peter Nicol, whose campaign to be the first British player to become world champion was carried to the third round with a second successive straight-games win.

The world No.1 beat the Egyptian Amir Wagdi 15-4, 15-9, 15-13, though Nicol says he still does not feel completely settled on the court.

Four seeds were defeated, the others being the Australians Dan Jenson and Byron Davis, and Mark Calcutt of England, making six beaten in the tournament so far.

The Guardian

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SportsGuardian

Wimbledon give holders the blues



All you need is gloves... Marcus Gayle, the Wimbledon striker, makes an acrobatic effort as Bernard Lambourde clears the danger at Selhurst Park

PHOTOGRAPH: STU FORSTER

Worthington Cup, quarter-final: Wimbledon 2 Chelsea 1

Chelsea dive after Earle's pearl

Martin Thorpe

WIMBLEDON knocked the holders out last night to reach their third semi-final in two seasons. As a result Chelsea suffered their first defeat in 20 games, missing out on a club record by one match.

Wimbledon got off to a

great start, going ahead after just 15 minutes as the Chelsea defence appeared frozen to the spot by the bitter night air. Neil Ardley swung in a cross which the visiting back line watched sail over apparently expecting their goalkeeper to come and claim the ball. But, fatally, Dmitri Kharine stayed on his line and Earle, running in, scored from six yards.

The goal was just reward for Wimbledon's more organised and competitive early approach as they made light of Chelsea's plan to boss the crucial central area by stringing five men across midfield. But numbers could not com-

pete with commitment and three minutes after taking the lead Wimbledon went extremely close to extending it. Frank Lehoucq, reflecting Chelsea's tentativeness, underhit a back pass to Kharine but Carl Leaburn shot wide from the edge of the area when a pass inside to the unmarked Marcus Gayle offered a more threatening option.

After beating under-strength Aston Villa and Arsenal sides in the previous rounds, Chelsea's habit of fielding predominantly squad players in this tournament was to danger of being exposed by a full-strength Wimbledon, who welcomed back Hughes after suspension.

Not even the return of Dennis Wise, Chelsea's own bad boy, after a four-game ban, could lift a team showing seven changes from last Saturday's draw with Sheffield Wednesday. Vialli was a striker alone as much as a lone striker as his midfield, despite their numbers, struggled to communicate with him.

Vialli had scored five goals for Chelsea in the previous rounds. As Neil Sullivan, Wimbledon's keeper, walked in at half-time, his gloves were hardly soiled. Vialli's response was to give himself a striking partner, bringing on Tore Andre Flo for Bjarne Goldbaek.

After such a poor first half,

Chelsea's all-white strip had taken on the appearance of a flag of surrender. But Vialli's team brought renewed vigour to the new half and for the first time in the game went close to scoring. Gustavo Poyet shot just wide from 12 yards, then headed straight at Sullivan from close range.

Wimbledon, however, continued to pose a threat. On 51 minutes Hughes cut in from the left side of the area and fired in a stringing shot which Kharine failed to hold. The keeper was then forced to react quickly as the Wimbledon forwards closed in, kicking the ball away while lying on the ground.

As the game progressed,

however, the more fractious it became with Graham Poll dishing out his fourth yellow card on 65 minutes — all four to home players.

Chelsea brought on Roberto di Matteo for Jody Morris, hoping his experience might lead to an equaliser. Instead, Wimbledon increased their lead. Lehoucq was adjudged to have fouled Gayle, for which he was booked, and Hughes converted the penalty.

References: G. Poll (Tring).

The English art of getting it wrong



Matthew Engel

THE English cricket team made many mistakes during the Perth Test but perhaps the biggest was having their terrible day on Saturday. This means that instead of getting reported in the daily papers, who know that tomorrow is another day, they were right in the firing line for the Sundays, who fired the entire munitions dump at them.

English cricket is sensitive to such matters these days. Little more than a year ago its ruling body, the ECB, had only one media man and he rarely spoke to journalists. Now it is going to the other extreme.

Tomorrow the great transformation of county cricket into a two-division Championship is expected to be announced. This change, for the year 2000, is entirely media-driven, pushed through by a chairman, Lord MacLaurin, desperate to be seen by the press to be doing something, and wearily accepted by county chairmen tired of being called names all the time for resisting it.

In cricketing terms the advantages of such a switch are heavily outweighed by the disadvantages. Promotion and relegation will be a spurious element in the season, creating club-country conflict and forcing the counties into short-term manoeuvring rather than long-term development of players. Giving kids a chance will be to court relegation.

From 2000 England will be playing seven Tests and six or seven one-day internationals a summer, which means the top cricketers will take almost no part in the Championship. It is thus meaningless as a competition. In the longish term there is the danger that cricket will disappear as a spectator sport from large chunks of the country.

The move is expected to encourage sponsorship (maybe), media coverage (a fraction, perhaps) and crowds (it won't). Optimists think it will make county cricket more competitive. Yes, but in the wrong way: counties will duck

and dive for advantage, not to deliver Test players. This is a rotten idea, but it is a rotten idea whose time has come.

Sports are best served when they are run by people who actually know what they think. Under pressure the England management in Australia is also starting to wobble. In August the selectors worked out their balance and strategy, talking long and hard with the players. John Crawley to Graeme Hick. No new facts have emerged since then except that Alex Tudor has developed quicker than expected and Dominic Cork has regressed.

England were always likely to be walloped in Perth. The miracle is that they are only 1-0 down coming to the less hostile pitches of the remaining Tests, where they might nick a victory. But now nobody's sure of anything more. Cook, they are thinking, wasn't Hick impressive? Maybe we should play seven batsmen...

Hick played marvellously in the second innings. This was just the situation in which he always plays marvellously. No pressure at all; the game was already effectively kaput. In the first innings, when he could have made a difference to the result, he failed.

He has always failed in those situations, with the possible exception of the Bombay Test in 1989-90 (six long winters ago), when he made 178 but England lost anyway.

THE next Test, nine days hence, is at the Adelaide Oval, which is egg-shaped, with long straight boundaries but short square ones. Thus anyone who bowls short gets cluttered off the back foot, especially by Australian batsmen. That means England need bowlers who can pitch the ball up, even at the risk of being driven down the ground. That means bringing back Angus Fraser and Robert Croft.

Anyway, haven't we learned from Dropping Fraser is Always Wrong? It is also likely to be hot and dry, which means having five front-line bowlers. Four will get knackered; four of our lot will anyway. It is also likely to favour batsmen. If the six top batsmen in England play, and they all fail, then we deserve to lose the Ashes, simple as that. Playing seven is simply pathetic. Like so much else in English cricket.

More cricket, page 15

Belle of the ball club strikes £45m deal

WHO says nice guys finish first? The baddest man in sport, the baseball superstar Albert Belle, yesterday walked into a \$45 million deal with the Baltimore Orioles which will earn him a tidy \$750,000 a week for five years.

Belle, described by his biographer as "the most thoroughly maladjusted personality ever to pass across American sports",

has a violent and foul-mouthed CV in which opponents, reporters and even autograph-hunters have fallen victim.

His Tysonesque behaviour has led to a \$50,000 fine for verbally abusing a woman TV reporter, a suspension for flattening a Milwaukee baseman and a Baltimore night car chase with children after they threw eggs at his house.

But, with more than 330 career home runs to his name, his earning power is still on the rise, despite confessions of heavy gambling and charges of domestic assault in July which were later dropped.

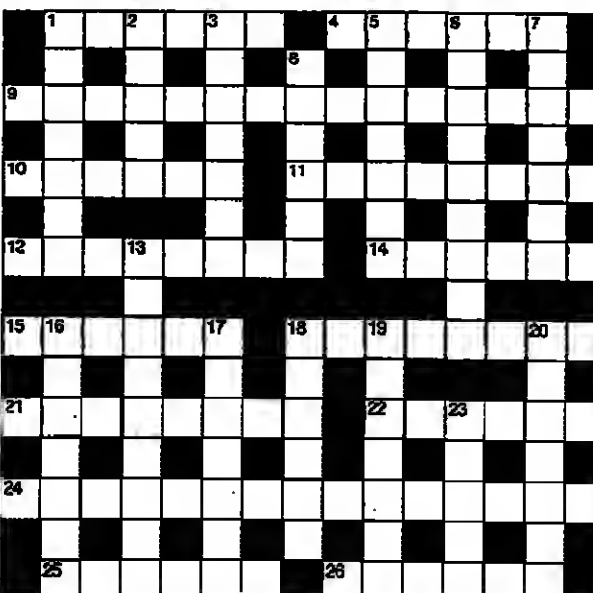
Just a week after the Premiership bad 'un Duncan Ferguson completed a \$40,000-a-week deal with Newcastle, the Americans proved yesterday that

whatever we do, they can do much, much bigger.

Not only is Belle naughtier than Ferguson, he will now be 20 times richer. He walked out on Chicago White Sox hours after a clause in his contract — which stated he must be one of the three highest-paid players — came into effect, after Randy Johnson's new \$52.4 million, four-year deal with Arizona.

Guardian Crossword No 21,447

Set by Araucaria



Across

- 1 Arrive on a leaving day? That's funny (5)
- 4 On the left I'm talking of a pact (3-3)
- 9 French city backed Italian one in money-making with larks? (5,3,7)
- 10 Avocat fluttering from A to A, perhaps (5)

Down

- 11 Offer for consideration of the Eurocept? (5)
- 12 Exist without someone to wait on one? I shine! (5,3)
- 14 Model in island in search of a heart (3,3)
- 15 Couturiere takes heart from broadcasters (5)
- 18 Wicked city built by ram or hog (5)
- 21 Charge less for tenderness? (5)

22,24 Impartial, as Murdoch papers was to rebellion after 9, with ill-used maiden's song (4,2,3,3,3,5)

25 Bird around the Dardanelles (5)

26 Periodical means of communication has its attraction (5)

1 Part of church with its top in 15 (7)

2 French gentleman on island with seamy singer (5)

3 Do I turn to see, so to say — see, it's out of order, see? (7)

5 Settle differences — get it for decreasing? (4,3)

6 Country gentleman has depressing experience after long article (9)

7 Dickens entertaining grandmother to a load of new money (7)

8 Religious building goes ahead (5)

13 Charge store, a scam for the less intelligent (5)

16 Worker with great enthusiasm for washing woollens? (4,3)

17 Permission for permissiveness? (7)

18 Rich food at the Golden Gate? (5)

19 Island takes up "Preserve the killer whale!" (7)

20 Range of the month in opposition (7)

23 Poles keep country girl with 12 (5)

CROSSWORD SOLUTION 21,446

20 Range of the month in opposition (7)

23 Poles keep country girl with 12 (5)

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SUTTER HOME

CALIFORNIA CHARDONNAY

Perfect without soy-braised sea bass & wilted pak choi.

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What becomes of the middle classes?

Understandably, parents from all over London consider that a free education in this place is worth a fortune. The school's reputation, for example, sends the support letters from London, some even mailed to the north. Upon an educational point of view, their journey is clearly worth while. Although a GCSE score is some-
times a little low, the school is a place in Camden's neighbourhood that far outperforms schools; others such as Perry, seek out selective schools with less confident teachers. The school's reputation is such that conversations about parents' putting their children on the 'Mile to Putney' are others simply give up, and move to Crystal End.

To a lesser extent, of course, this kind of soundbites happens in cities all over England. Many education authorities confront the same problem: how can the middle classes be persuaded to support their local schools? This is why a look at Bellingham is instructive.

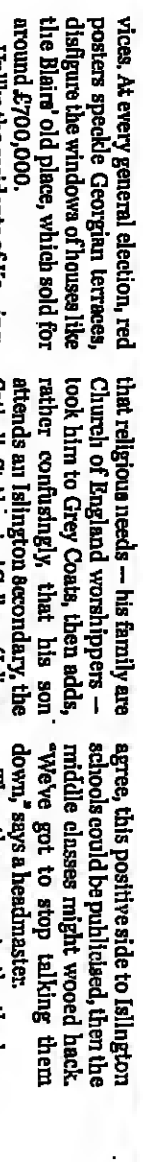
education. One of its tasks is to persuade failing poor middle-class parents to let the authority's schools.

Currently, many such parents would no more co-operate than a future for their babies than they would leave them mangled in a bath, or feed them British hoes! The thorough may be synonymous with *blatantness*, New Labour-approved effluence, akin with parents who believe that elite grammar schools should be shown no mercy – yet his own compunctions remain strong the worst in the country, in the new league tables they came third from the bottom. The reason for this failure? The refusal of all these privileged, middle-class parents to outpace their local competitors.

As Perry complains: "The wealth-

If parents in this country value education as a state secondary education for their children, then, really, who will? For the odd thing about this flight is that many of those responsible have sent their children to local primaries, and would genuinely prefer their children to continue at a local secondary school, because these schools are closer by and don't cost £1,500 a term, but also because a venal habit of number of the 'wealthy' people in London truly believe themselves to be socialist.

It is thanks to their principles as the Perry and his colleagues are still – just – in power, presiding over the infamous garbage-strewn streets of London for some of the worst schools



Vices. At every genus election, red robes, like those worn by the monks of the famous Georgian convent, distinguish the windows of houses like the Blarney old place, which sold for around £700,000.

Church of England, worthipps – took him to Grey Coat, then added, rather contemptuously, that his son attends an Edinburg academy, the

schools were so pious, that the middle classes might weed mark. We got to stop talking them down, says a headmaster.

Unlike the residents of Aremington, say, or Wandsworth, idologs obdurate are famously stammered and defensive about their desertion, St. Aloysius is one of only two schools in the borough to use interviews and back the anxious hourglass, across ' then they come to the not-often GCSSE results. Also, these are not, it must be said, likely to tempt

they matter that it's have been driven to it, that their children's future must not be sacrificed to parental principle. Or, like the Bliers, they suitably regret the incompatibility of their religious beliefs and an education alongside Islamophobia, and arrange an interview at the Oratory. I would never accuse anybody of any political party of being hypocritical as far as the way they want to bring up their children. Perry says, exactly. "Because everybody's got their different views about what they want, and usually it's wanting to do what they perceive to be best for their children."

So does his own feeling that Grey Coats will do best for his girls send out an encouraging message to other Islamophobia activists? Perry explains

assessment tests to guarantee a "balanced" intake. Their "reflexes, of course, ensure that other Islamophobia schools remain as imbalanced as ours. "Rimmi enough," Perry says, "I'm the first child of education to send my child into any Islamophobia secondary school." His predecessors have favoured "Alnair Broughley, a Canadian school which is much in demand among Islamophobia's educational refugees."

Perry again mentions his son's school — though not the daughters — at a meeting of the education committee in Islamophobia Town Hall. The committee discusses a collection of nothing, favourable Orsted reports, setting the fine leadership and good value for money offered by several local schools. Only the councillors

the borough's nine secondary schools, the percentage of the five GCSEs at A to C grades has dropped from 22.4 in 1997 to 23.3 per cent. Yet again, Islamophobia will scrape the bottom of the barrel. At George Orwell school, the borough's worst, the GCSE average was 10 per cent.

Chris Fryer, a liberal democratic councillor, declares that children are being "appallingly" let down. He points out that his should know — his daughter goes to Islamophobia Green, one of the borough's three failing schools. Talking them up will do nothing to improve matters, he protests. "We can start by recognising the truth about our schools."

At Highgrym Grove, the GCSE score was 15.23 — down from 16.6, it sounds dire enough — until you talk

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Abstract

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- 23 Confom (3,3,4)

Down

- 1 Tied (5)
- 2 Haplogues (4)
- 3 Gains with ball and rhyacanal (5)
- 4 Not to be apical (5)
- 5 Ancient port on the Mediterranean (7)
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- 9 Chial mountain system of North America (3,7)
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A 60-year-old Irishman with an odd hairdo and an army of golf-playing fans is trouncing the hip young DJs in the breakfast ratings war. Charlotte Raven salutes Terry Wogan

Top o' the morning

My grandfather used to dream about Terry Wogan. He would have been a very successful radio personality, he thought. He would have been a very successful radio personality, he thought. He would have been a very successful radio personality, he thought.



Terry's all gold... Wogan's brand of gentle banter has seen him show outshine Zeb and Chris Evans

Increasingly, this is a culture where people talk to you, not to you. Broadcaster Terry Wogan, however, is a different kind of radio personality. He is a man who talks to you, not to you. He is a man who talks to you, not to you.

It may not look so good on the page, but this made me laugh. One thing I really enjoyed in the book was the way Wogan talks to you, not to you. He is a man who talks to you, not to you. He is a man who talks to you, not to you.

One morning, as Wogan was making his way to work, he was thinking about the fact that he was a man who talks to you, not to you. He is a man who talks to you, not to you. He is a man who talks to you, not to you.



Lost world? The latest financial problem to hit the rainforest could be devastating

Now these groups are combined and angry as their money has disappeared. As with the rainforest itself, trust cannot quickly be restored if international agencies and national politicians decide again to back the project.

Robert Greenall, friends of the Earth Amazon coordinator, believes that intensive lobbying by Brazilian and overseas organisations is needed to persuade the government that the short-term gain from the cuts will be outweighed by the long-term losses.

While the debate begins to take shape, all over Brazil, giant dozers are at work, clearing away on beaches will be the last sight of the rainforest. In April 1998, 2000 when Brazil celebrates its 500th anniversary, eight years later than the rest of Latin America.

Indigenous organisations say there is little to celebrate because for them, it has been 600 years of violence, murder and land theft. If the cuts go ahead they will have even less to celebrate, and the Amazon rainforest will be even less protected than it already is.

Know we can get money from the riches in the forest? Viana, of the Workers' Party, will be the first governor of the Brazilian Amazon who's political roots are in the rubber tappers' fight. His term, which starts in January, will mark a new era for the rainforest.

the introduction of new technology, local environmentalists are urging a moderation of the prevailing Western opinion on green issues. For instance, Jorge Viana, the governor-elect of the state of Acre, which includes Xapuri, is calling for an end to the moratorium on logging.

betries on a sustainable basis. After the death of the Brazilian government, the rubber tappers' movement came under immense pressure from the international community to come up with a plan to protect the rainforest, and in 1990 the first extractive reserves were started.

But the sense of victory was short-lived. Rubber tappers cannot control their own land. They are still dependent on the international community, and they are still dependent on the international community.

there is a feeling that only by diversifying into other rubber products will the inhabitants of the reserves be able to escape from extreme poverty. At this year's contest in Birmingham, he presented the show from the stage, delivering a message with no discernible embarrassment. But the audience was not in the mood for a show about the rubber tappers.

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6/Appointments

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

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SENIOR COMMUNITY NETWORKS MANAGER

Brack Council has made community participation a key corporate objective. Council officers are determined to make community consultation and involvement a reality. Brack Council's new Community Development Directorate plays a lead role in developing communities to be able to become actively involved in the planning and delivery of services. We are looking for an experienced and committed individual to play a key role in this process. You will need to have at least 3 years' practical community development experience and community participation skills. You must be able to work closely with the Council and its various committees and sub-committees. You will also be responsible for the development of community networks as part of Brack Council's modernising local government agenda.

COMMUNITY NETWORKS OFFICER

We also need an experienced and enthusiastic community development practitioner to support our Area Communities Forum and other community networks. You will strengthen and develop community networks with the Council and involve local people in the planning and delivery of services. You will also be responsible for the development of community networks as part of Brack Council's modernising local government agenda.

A KEY ROLE IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE BUILT HERITAGE

Assistant Regional Director
South East Region
Salary package c. £37,000

English Heritage is the nation's leading conservation body and is responsible for over 400 historic sites throughout the country. We are currently recruiting for an Assistant Regional Director to manage the built heritage of the South East region. The successful candidate will have a good understanding of the built heritage of the South East region and will be responsible for the management of a multi-disciplinary team of inspectors and other staff. The successful candidate will also be responsible for the development of the built heritage of the South East region and will be responsible for the management of a multi-disciplinary team of inspectors and other staff.

English Heritage is committed to an equal opportunities policy



ENGLISH HERITAGE

BLAV

For 100 years we have been striving to achieve a better world. Through our campaigning, lobbying, advising, influencing and training we have become the leading organisation in our field. As a result of our campaigning we have brought about many changes in the way the UK Government operates. We are now looking for a Chief Executive to lead our organisation.

Chief Executive

As our campaign continues we need a successful individual to lead our organisation. The successful candidate will have a good understanding of the built heritage of the South East region and will be responsible for the management of a multi-disciplinary team of inspectors and other staff. The successful candidate will also be responsible for the development of the built heritage of the South East region and will be responsible for the management of a multi-disciplinary team of inspectors and other staff.

INSEAD

INSEAD, the leading international business school, located just south of Paris, seeks candidates with an international background for the following position:

Reunion Gifts Coordinator

To work with the Director of the INSEAD Alumni Fund and team in the context of the development and maintenance of the Alumni Fund. The successful candidate is required to have the following qualifications:

- International presence and social skills needed to represent INSEAD.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills.
- Strong project management, analytical and organisational skills.
- Ability to work as a team player and to foster a collegial working environment, as well as the ability to work independently.
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ACENVO

Association of Chief Executives of National Voluntary Organisations
ACENVO supports chief executives of national and international voluntary organisations, provides high standards of continuing education and aims to increase the effectiveness of the voluntary sector.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

ACENVO is looking for a professional development director to lead our professional development programme. The successful candidate will have a good understanding of the built heritage of the South East region and will be responsible for the management of a multi-disciplinary team of inspectors and other staff. The successful candidate will also be responsible for the development of the built heritage of the South East region and will be responsible for the management of a multi-disciplinary team of inspectors and other staff.

THE SOCIETY OF HUMANISTS

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(HONORARY)
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Carmel Fitzsimons learned she had won Ireland's prestigious Kavanagh Award in the same week that OUP decided to axe its poetry list. But is she downhearted? Not a bit of it



As we drove where Patrick Kavanagh (above) once walked, the whole bus began to sing

It was a hot day in the heart of Dublin, where he was teaching water-skiing, that Carmel Fitzsimons learned she had won Ireland's prestigious Kavanagh Award. It was the same week that OUP decided to axe its poetry list. But is she downhearted? Not a bit of it.

Blackwell is certainly more suited to being an independent. He's a big fan of Kavanagh. The New Orleans-based rapper who has built his No Limit music and film business into a multi-million-dollar outfit in the past two years. "He's making his own films, issuing them straight to video, and they sell open air," she says. "I don't want to do any DVD."

DVD, a digital video cassette that Blackwell claims will slash costs and revolutionise film-making, is his current passion. He has two films in production - "Third World Cop," a Jamaican thriller, and "Black & White," a comedy set in New York featuring Claudia Schiffer and Mike Myers.

Blackwell's no movie novice - he helped finance the seminal Jamaican film *The Harder They Come* and has produced a number of local films, including last year's *Dancehall Queen*. The revelling of *Chinatown* in Vegas, even broke all local box-office records, even holding "Theme off the number one spot. By setting budgets between \$250,000 and \$2 million for each production, Blackwell aims to get a low-budget, high-turnover industry going. This may look odd alongside his strategy for the hotel business - only the most elegant and expensive cities will do - but he sees no paradox. "Hotels are like us," he says. "The place should be happening. It should be fun."

It was at a hotel, where he was teaching water-skiing, that Blackwell spotted the first act he oversaw. Island's debut album was *Lance Hayward At The Half Moon Hotel*, featuring veteran Jamaican guitarist Ernest Ranglin. Ranglin also became Blackwell's debut release on his own label Palm Pictures with the acclaimed CD in *Secret Of The Lost Riddim*.

While many independent record labels started with black music and moved on to rock, Blackwell has not forgotten his roots. He is now championing Senegalese star Baaba Maal in much the same way as he did Bob Marley 25 years ago. "When I met Bob, he had great charisma, great songs. I asked him if he was good on stage, so he had everything. I had already been behind artists who had become successful, and knew and loved Jamaican music. People couldn't believe I was ready to finance this wild Jamaican guy, but I believed in him. It's the same with Baaba."

Since he returned to Jamaica last year, Blackwell has set up a number of local educational programmes. "Music, film, hotels, education, sport," he says. "It's an overall foundation for what's going on at the moment. Jamaica is very creative and the basic idea was to provide more resources to the people could find a career way of expressing themselves and standing on their own two feet. You always tend to do what your roots have led you to - and in my case that was identifying musicians or people of talent, helping to get them going."

Jamaica's place that has always inspired me, given me a source of strength. Much has changed here, but not the essence of the people. And they're great people."

well speak out against them in the *Los Angeles Times*. Days later he left Island and the Polygram beast.

It's a more corporate climate than it used to be because there's so much more money involved. Blackwell says of today's music industry, "The record business was something you got into because you loved music. Nobody went into it to make money."

he could have been tripping from Kiburn, to give me from about 1970. But he was calling from Jamaica to County Monaghan and she sounded like my friend, but fish, grandmother.

"You had better sit down, my dear," said the red-haired woman, on the phone, from a farmhouse in the north-western townlands of rural Ireland. "Because you are our winner of the 1998 Patrick Kavanagh Poetry Award."

I sat down. One thousand pounds can make you light-headed, even if the children have already turned it into a whopping poem, and it's not just in poetry terms, good money. The Kavanagh Award is one of Ireland's most prestigious prizes, with previous winners including Paul Durcan and Eavan Boland, Michael Ondaatje, Peter Sin.

In one sense it's a good time to win it. It's a pool to be in. It's a culture, not a prize, that is flourishing again in Ireland, just as it did at the last turn of the century. But in another sense it couldn't have picked a worse time. Last University Press to place its poetry list and drop it so poets' magazines have been left in a poetic recession, which is closer to the spirit of Patrick Kavanagh himself, who almost starved to death on the streets of Dublin in the fifties.

My award was being presented in Limerick, his birthplace, as part of the Patrick Kavanagh Week. I decided to have a quick word with the poet and publisher Peter Raftery, just to check whether he thought anyone would turn up. He said: "The poet will be at the top. The problems of Irish poetry are not the problems of English poetry. Here in Ireland we sell more books of poetry every year, in the day-to-day life of our society the idea of poetry is closer to the centre. Most people in Ireland have a greater sense of poetry than in England."

He added this example. When they first addressed the Irish parliament last week he did not quote any poetry. "It would be unthinkable for the Irish to do so to do such a thing. Poetry has a sacredness to our lives."

He conceded that the closure of OUP's poetry arm could put pressure on other publishers to give hospitality to names on the OUP list instead of feeding out new voices. But to consolation, he added, "Poets of stature do not come streaming down the stream as they go to publication."

to those beautiful hills of Monaghan, how they rejoice in the poet who swam down their river time and onto the stony grey soil of Kiburn. These folk even speak in poetry. Describing an old fellow who loved life, a local told me, "Ah, and it will kill him to die. Playwright and poet Tom MacIntyre gave me an everlasting image when he said that the Irish for hybrid translates as the little cow of God."

That's how it was all weekend. It was examined like a Christmas stocking to the toe with drinking, eating, poetry-reading, drinking, playing, drinking, story-telling. Once in a while we crossed the river under a starlight just to breathe to the quiet beauty of the place. Then back to the poetry and the drink.

On a bus tour of Kavanagh country, actor Gene Carroll became the poet, telling stories of the black hills of Shanmuck. But it was not like the bus tours you might meet at on holiday. Up the windy road bachelors came to meet us. As we drove along the hungry lasses that Patrick Kavanagh had evoked in his desperation, the whole bus started to sing his love-lament *Raglan Road*. You wouldn't need to be a poet to start feeling the tears.

The organisers at the Patrick Kavanagh Centre sent word by whisper at three in the afternoon there was to be an unstructured, secret wealth-laying on the grave. It had been thought this tradition of the awards would have to be abandoned after an incident this summer when Patrick Kavanagh's modernist gravestone was pulled down, smashed into antiseptic and buried in the bog. The desperation was part of a long-standing Kavanagh family feud.

No one is naming names but the grave is now marked by a simple wooden cross, which is what the Kavanagh family believe the poet would have wanted, rather than the modernist heathen-style stone. The Kavanagh Society does not know where to turn, so we said our prayers for him almost furiously in the blue of a sharp November day. Later, I read my poems to a packed hall crowded with dignitaries and people I had met in the pub. One of them was an old friend, a poet, a friend of mine, a fellow who loved life, a local told me, "Ah, and it will kill him to die. Playwright and poet Tom MacIntyre gave me an everlasting image when he said that the Irish for hybrid translates as the little cow of God."

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The Parent Trap

Arts

Chris Blackwell brought us Bob Marley, U2 and Roxy Music. But then he walked away from his world-famous record label. **Garth Cartwright** finds out how he's managing on his own

No Island no cry

Sitting in Chris Blackwell's office, I notice a black-and-white photo of a man about a year old. The devil-may-care expression looks familiar. Garth Cartwright, it is. Blackwell, the signature that is to Jamaican music, is now 61, his face bears the lines of a lifetime spent in the sun. Only his tiny blue eyes hint at why a rival once described him as a "baby-faced killer". We exchange pleasantries but Blackwell looks exhausted. It has been a hectic weekend, even by his standards. Having recently bought and developed a hundred acres of coastal land, he has just introduced it to the public with a jazz and blues festival. Hurricane Mitch turned the event into a Caribbean Glenelg, and on the first day only one artist got to play. Blackwell hopes the rather predictable named Jamaica Bond Beach will host five or six music festivals a year. Ambitious as this may seem, launched the successful Smashes and Sunfests reggae festivals and the popularity of the US (Miami is 90 minutes away) makes Jamaica an exotic location for tourists who fancy good sunsets with their beach holidays.

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One man and his dog... Chris Blackwell contemplates a less cluttered life. Left: Bob Marley, the greatest musician to have maintained a low profile, in part because of Visson's struggle with bone marrow cancer. His public falling-out with the PolyGram board over Island last year is something he also chooses to speak of with delicacy. "It was a feeling of relief, not grief," he says of walking out on the company he founded 40 years ago. "I'm really enjoying what I'm doing now."

Notes & Queries

Brains and drains • Magnetic personalities • Caught over a barrel • Shotgun diplomacy

Edited by Joseph Barker

N&Q on the web

back is not only less able to dispense the forces of a whip, but also more likely to tear and gape when the skin is finally broken.

Nicotine would have slung the seawater splashed on his open wounds, and then be left on deck as a deterrent to others.

Matthew Hendry, Cypriot, Rye.

Why do we say "cold turkey" when a person is attempting to stop taking drugs?

● One of the many unpleasant symptoms of withdrawal from opiates — and opiate-based drugs — is an extreme physical restlessness which, among other things, manifests itself in a fairly extreme form of involuntary twitching. One of the main aspects of this is a kind of shuddering (involuntary) shuddering of the shoulders and slight forward movement of the head. Addicts and ex-addicts (like myself) refer to this as "clucking" as it is similar to the way turkeys and chickens move when they walk. I also feel that addicts interpret the "cold" part to mean the extreme twitching that can accompany withdrawal.

Now supplied, Rotterdam, Middlesex.

In there any scientific basis for regarding some colours as harmonising with each other and some as clashing, or is this just a cultural convention?

● Perhaps one cannot detect easily the "general ocular discomfort" brought on by viewing red and green together (Notes & Queries, November 11) as I find these colours "go" very well — unlike, typically, orange and pink. I have always thought that in nature it is difficult to find clashing colours. I don't usually bother too much to colour co-ordinate a lot of freshly picked flowers — garden or wild — as they always look beautiful.

Janet Probyn, Zomba, Malawi.

If I were given a loaded gun and diplomatic immunity, would it be all right to go and shoot General Pinochet?

● I would suggest no, because of the direct consequences for yourself. Killing is an action that leaves a potential within your mind for very unpleasant, painful effects in the future. However, if it were of benefit to others to kill Pinochet it may be worth your accepting these unpleasant consequences for the greater good. Those who wish for retribution can contemplate how Pinochet, in his next life, is going to experience a painful and terrifying world as a result of his evil, dehumanising actions, and perhaps be able to develop compassion for him.

Gia Kiang Delek, Tlopa Budhist Centre, Vancouver, Canada.

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Gold turkey... Additions and extra additions refer to the twitching symptoms of withdrawal as 'clucking', as it is similar to the way turkeys move when they walk. PHOTOGRAPH: ALAN REEVE

historical evidence to firmly place Albanians in this group, there is not enough evidence to demonstrate a clear relationship to any other Indo-European language. The difficulty of proving this relationship arises, first, because there is the scarcity of any written material in the products of the 15th century, and second, surrounding languages — such as Latin, Greek and Macedonian — have provided loan words into Albanian throughout its history.

The Indo-European family of languages provides nearly all of the members being Basque (which has no known relation to any other language), the Finno-Ugric group (including Finnish, Estonian and Hungarian) and the Altaic group of languages (which includes Turkish and Arabic).

David Gledhill, Crosby, Liverpool.

What is the origin of the phrase "over a barrel" — is it French?

● In the "whipped over a barrel" is to suffer one of the many methods of punishment invented by sailors, who have few rivals in this field. A mere whipping is painful enough, but sailors discovered that the victim could be greatly increased by first wrapping the victim's feet around a large barrel, and binding his limbs tightly to its feet. This stretched the flesh of the

do to improve the quality of sound? — Japan and the United States, for example — able to manage initial with interest rates considerably lower than our own? — China Pension, Colchester, Essex.

Post answers to Notes & Queries, The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER. Fax: 0171-239 9835, email: nqguardian.co.uk. Please remember to include your address and phone number.

When was the first passport issued, and by whom? — Ami Eades, Rome, Italy.

Into which bin do the blue coloured bottles go? — John Lewis, Leek, Staffs.

The hearing aid issued by the NHS at my local hospital for slight deafness distorts music on CDs or tapes although it is accurate for speech. Why is this and what can I do? — Why are other economies

used to describe a bogus doctor, and what is the association with clutter? — Ross Gampie, Stroud, Gloucestershire.

To what does the "pied" refer in the Pied Piper of Hamelin? — Roger O'Keefe, Cambridge.

Any answers?

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Blackwell's life is a testament to the power of music. He has built a vast empire from a small island, and his influence on the music industry is immeasurable. His ability to see talent and nurture it has made him a legend. The photo of the young man in his office is a reminder of the journey he has taken, from a small boy to a man who has shaped the sound of a generation.

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Too young to unwrap a condom?

[Faint, illegible handwritten notes]

Real As Hell

